# 1NC Shell

#### The 1AC is premised on a politics of hope wed to the notion that society is always redeemable, always progressing, but never quite here. This politics of affirming progress-to-come naturalizes anti-black violence. Call for reform is the perfection of slavery – the demand for progress is when the slave accepts its dependence on the master.  Only abandoning the aff’s political hope subverts this myth of progress which coheres itself through black suffering.

**Farley 05[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Slavery is with us still. We are haunted by slavery. We are animated by slavery. White-over-black is slavery and segregation and neosegregation and every situation in which the distribution of material or spiritual goods follows the colorline. **The movement from slavery to segregation to neosegregation to whatever form of white-over-black it is that may come** with post-modernity or after **is not toward freedom**. **The movement** from slavery to segregation to neosegregation **is** the movement of **slavery perfecting itself**. White-over-black is neosegregation. White-over-black is segregation. White-over-black is slavery. All of it is white-over-black, only white-over-black, and that continually. **The story of progress up from slavery is a lie**, the longest lie. The story of progress up from slavery is **told** juridically **in** the form of **the rule of law**. Slavery is the rule of law. And slavery is death. **The slave perfects itself** as a slave **when it bows down before its master of its own free will**. **That is the moment in which the slave accomplishes the impossible reconciliation of its freedom with its unfreedom by willing itself unfree.**3 When exactly does this perfection of slaverytake place? **The slave bows down before its master when it prays for legal relief, when it prays for equal rights, and** **while it cultivates the** field of **law** hoping for an answer. The slave’s free choice, the slave’s leap of faith, can only be taken under conditions of legal equality. Only after emancipation and legal equality, only after rights, can the slave perfect itself as a slave. Bourgeois legality is the condition wherein equals are said to enter the commons of reason4 or the kingdom of ends5 or the New England town meeting of the soul to discuss universalizable principles, to discuss equality and freedom. Much is made of these meetings, these struggles for law, these festivals of the universal. Commons, kingdom, town meeting, there are many mansions in the house of law, but the law does not forget its father, as Maria Grahn-Farley observes: **The law of slavery has not been forgotten by the law of segregation; the law of segregation has not been forgotten by the law of neosegregation**. The law guarding the gates of slavery, segregation, and neosegregation has not forgotten its origin; it remembers its father and its grandfather before that. It knows what master it serves; it knows what color to count.6 **To wake from slavery is to see that everything must go, every law room**,7 every great house, **every plantation**, all of it, everything.

#### Civil society is structured on the notion of anti-blackness. Social death is an unavoidable condition of existence for the black body— how we relate to this condition is all that is important.

**Wilderson[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Civil society is** **not** a terrain **intended for the Black subject**. It is coded as waged and wages are White. Civil society is the terrain where hegemony is produced, contested, mapped. And the invitat ion to p articipate in hegemony's gestures of influence, leadership, and consent is not ext ended to t he unwaged. We live **in the world, but** exist **outside of civil society**. **This** structurally impossible position **is a paradox, because the Black subject**, the slave, **is vital to political economy: s**/**he kick-starts capital** at its genesis **and rescues it from its over-accumulation crisis** at its end. **But Marxism has no account of this** phenomenal **birth and life-saving role played by the Black subject: from Marx** and Gr amsci **we have** con sistent **silence.** In taking Foucau lt to ta sk for a ssum ing a univ ersal s ubject in r evolt ag ainst d iscipline, in the same s pirit in which I have t aken Gr amsci to ta sk for as suming a u niversal sub ject, the subject of civil societ y in revolt a gainst capita l, Joy Jam es writes : The U.S. carceral network kills, however, and in its prisons, it kills more blacks than any other ethnic group. American prisons constitute an "outside" in U.S. political life. In fact, our **society displays waves of concentric outside circles with increasing distances from** bourgeois **self-policing**. **The state** routinely **polices** the14 unassim ilable in the hell of lockdow n, deprivat ion tanks , control units , and holes for political prisoners (Resisting State Violence 1996: 34 ) But this peculiar preoccupation is not Gramsci's bailiwick. His concern is with White folks; or with folks in a White (ned) enough subject position that they are confronted by, or threat ened by th e remova l of, a wag e -- be it monetary or social. But **Black subjectivity itself disarticulates** **the** Gramscian **dream** as a ubiquitous emancipatory strategy, **because** Gramsci, like most White activists, and **radical** American **movements** like the prison abolition movement, **has no** theory of the unwaged, no **solidarity with the slave** If we are to take Fanon at his word when he writes, #Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder # (37) then **we must accept the fact that no other body functions** in the Imaginary, the Symbolic, or the Real so completely **as a repository of complete disorder as the Black body**. **Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction** at the level of the Real, for **in its magnetizing of bullets the Black body functions as the map of gratuitous violence through which civil society is possible**: namely, those other bodies for which violence is, or can be, contingent. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Symbolic, for **Blackness in America generates no categories for the chromosome of History**, no data for the categories of Immigration or Sovereignty; it is an experience without analog # a past, without a heritage. **Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction** **at the level of the Imaginary for whoever says rape says Black**, # (Fanon) , **whoever says prison says Black, and whoever says** #**AIDS** # **says Black** (Sexton) # **the** #**Negro is a phobogenic object** # (Fanon). Indeed &a phobogenic object &a past without a heritage &the map of gratuitous violence &a program of complete disorder. But whereas **this realization is**, and should be **cause for alarm**, it should not be cause for lament, or worse, disavowal # not at least, for a true revolutionary, or for a **truly revolutionary movement** such as prison a bolition. 15 If a social movement is to be neither social democratic, nor Marxist, in terms of the structure of its political desire then it should **grasp the invitation to assume the positionality of subjects of social death** that present themselves; and, if we are to be honest with ourselves we must admit that the “Negro “ has been **inviting** Whites, and as well as **civil society’s** **junior partners, to the dance of social death** for hundreds of years, **but few have wanted to learn the steps**. They have been, and remain today

#### The role of the judge is to vote for the debater who better offers the best liberation strategy for black bodies. Traditional ethics fail to recognize the problem of anti-Blackness, as it roots in a philosophy that originates in a view from nowhere. The lack of embodied experience in discussions of ethics and philosophy allows the white body to assume the status of normativity by bracketing all others into their universal ethics.

**Yancy 05[[3]](#footnote-3)**

I write out of a personal existential context. This context is a profound source of knowledge connected to my "raced" body. Hence, I write from a place of lived embodied experience, a site of exposure. **In philosophy**, the only thing that **we are taught to "expose"** is a **weak argument**, a fallacy, or someone's "inferior" reasoning power. **The embodied self is bracketed and deemed** irrelevant to theory, superfluous and **cumbersome** in one's search for truth. **It is best**, or so we are told, **to reason from nowhere**.Hence, **the white** philosopher/**author presumes to speak for all of "us" without** the slightest **mention of** his or her **"raced" identity.** Self-consciously writing as a white male philosopher, Crispin Sartwell observes: Left to my own devices, I disappear as an author. That is the "whiteness" of my authorship. This **whiteness** of authorship **is**, for us, a form of authority; **to speak** (apparently) **from nowhere, for everyone**, is empowering, though one wields power here only by becoming lost to oneself. But such an authorship and authority is also pleasurable: it yields the pleasure of self-forgetting or [End Page 215] apparent transcendence of the mundane and the particular, and the pleasure of power expressed in the "comprehension" of a range of materials. (1998, 6) **To theorize the Black body one must** "**turn to the body as the radix for interpreting racial experience**" (Johnson [1993, 600]).1 It is important to note that **this** particular **strategy** also **functions as a lens through which to** theorize and **critique whiteness**; for the Black body's "racial" experience is fundamentally linked to the oppressive modalities of the "raced" white body. However, there is no denying that my own "racial" experiences or the social performances of whiteness can become objects of critical reflection. In this paper, my objective is to describe and theorize situations where the Black body's subjectivity, its lived reality, is reduced to instantiations of the white imaginary, resulting in what I refer to as "the phenomenological return of the Black body."2 These instantiations are embedded within and evolve out of the complex social and historical interstices of whites' efforts at self-construction through complex acts of erasure vis-à-vis Black people. These acts of self-construction, however, are myths/ideological constructions predicated upon maintaining white power. As James Snead has noted, "Mythification is the replacement of history with a surrogate ideology of [white] elevation or [Black] demotion along a scale of human value" (Snead 1994, 4). How I understand and theorize the body relates to the fact that the body—in this case, the Black body—is capable of undergoing a sociohistorical process of "phenomenological return" vis-à-vis white embodiment. The body's meaning—whether phenotypically white or black—its ontology, its modalities of aesthetic performance, its comportment, its "raciated" reproduction, is in constant contestation. **The hermeneutics of the body**, how it is understood, how it is "seen," **its "truth," is partly the result of a profound historical, ideological construction**. "The body" is positioned by historical practices and discourses. **The body is codified** as this or that **in terms of meanings that are sanctioned, scripted, and constituted** through processes of negotiation that are embedded within and serve various ideological interests that are grounded within further power-laden social processes. The historical plasticity of the body, the fact that it is a site of contested meanings, speaks to the historicity of its "being" as lived and meant within the interstices of social semiotics. Hence: a) the body is less of a thing/being than a shifting/changing historical meaning that is subject to cultural configuration/reconfiguration. The point here is to interrogate the "Black body" as a "fixed and material truth" that preexists "its relations with the world and with others"3 ; b) the body's meaning is fundamentally symbolic (McDowell 2001, 301), and its meaning is congealed through symbolic repetition and iteration that emits certain signs and presupposes certain norms; and, c) the body is a battlefield, one that is fought over again and again across particular historical moments and within particular social spaces. "In other words, the concept of the body provides only the illusion of self-evidence, facticity, 'thereness' for something [End Page 216] fundamentally ephemeral, imaginary, something made in the image of particular social groups" (301). On this score, it is not only the "Black body" that defies the ontic fixity projected upon it through the white gaze, and, hence, through the episteme of whiteness, but **the white body is** also fundamentally **symbolic, requiring demystification of its status as norm**, the paragon of beauty, order, innocence, purity, restraint, and nobility.

#### The only ethical demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm

Wilderson 10**[[4]](#footnote-4)**

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks.[[5]](#endnote-1) One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible.[[6]](#endnote-2) Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows

# Junior Partners 1NC

#### The 1AC is a struggle of junior partners to civil society that operate on top of the gratuitous violence acted upon the black body.

Wilderson **10**[[7]](#footnote-5)

Whereas **Humans exist on some plane of being and thus can become existentially present through some struggle for**/of/through **recognition, Blacks cannot attain the plane of recognition** (West 82). Spillers, Fanon, and Hartman maintain that the **violence** that **has positioned and repetitively re-positions the Black as a void of historical movement** is **without analog in the suffering dynamics of the ontologically alive**. The violence that turns the African into a thing is without analog because it does not simply oppress the Black through tactile and empirical technologies of oppression, like the “little family quarrels” which for Fanon exemplify the Jewish Holocaust. Rather, the gratuitous violence of the Black’s first ontological instance, the Middle Passage, “wiped out [his/her] metaphysics…his [her] customs and sources on which they are based” (BSWM 110). **Jews went into Auschwitz and came out as Jews. Africans went into the ships and came out as Blacks. The former is** a **Human** holocaust; **the latter is** a Human and a **metaphysical** holocaust. That is why it makes little sense to attempt analogy: the **Jews** **have** the **Dead** (the Muselmenn) **among them; the Dead have the Blacks among them** **This violence which turns a body into flesh, ripped apart literally and imaginatively, destroys the possibility of ontology because it positions the Black within an infinite and indeterminately horrifying and open vulnerability, an object made available (which is to say fungible) for any subject**. As such, “the **black has no ontological resistance in the eyes of** the white man” (110) or, more precisely, in the eyes of **Humanity. How is it that the Black appears to partner with** the **senior and junior partners** of civil society (Whites and colored immigrants, respectively), **when** in point of fact the **Black is not in the world? The answer lies in the ruse of analogy. By acting as if the Black is present, coherent, and above all human**, Black film **theorists** are “allowed” to **meditate** on cinema only after “consenting” to **a structural adjustment**.xvii Such an adjustment, required for the “privilege” of participating in the political economy of academe, is not unlike the structural adjustment debtor nations must adhere to for the privilege of securing a loan: signing on the dotted line means feigning ontological capacity regardless of the fact that Blackness is incapacity in its most pure and unadulterated form. **It means theorizing Blackness as “borrowed institutionality.”**xviii

#### Politics that focus on exploitation (i.e. – the satiable demands of civil society’s junior partners) produce a narrative of loss followed by restoration. These are the contingent freedoms that replace the Black void with a positive Human value; within the world and not against it. What is needed is freedom from the human race, the world, Gratuitous Freedom that demand not that the Black be made living again, but to bring the living to death.

Wilderson **10**[[8]](#footnote-6)

As sites of political struggle and loci of philosophical meditation, cultural capacity, civil society, and political agency give rise to maps and chronologies of loss and to dreams of restoration and redemption. The Marxist, postcolonial, ecological, and feminist narratives of loss followed by restoration and redemption are predicated on exploitation and alienation as the twin constitutive elements of an essential grammar of suffering. They are political narratives predicated on stories which they have the capacity to tell-and this is key-regarding the coherent ethics of their time and space dilemmas. **The Slave needs freedom not from** the wage relation, nor sexism, **homophobia**, **and patriarchy**; nor freedom in the form of land restoration. **These are** part and parcel of the diverse list of **contingent freedoms** of the "multitudes."36 The Slave needs freedom from the Human race, freedom from the world**.** The Slave requires gratuitous freedom. Only gratuitous freedom can repair the object status of his or her flesh, which itself is the product of accumulation's and fungibility's gratuitous violence. But what does the Slave's desire for gratuitous freedom mean for the Human's desire for contingent freedom? This difference between contingent freedom and gratuitous freedom brings us to Bush Mama and the specter of the BLA, to the irreconcilable imbroglio of the Black as a social and political being and the Human as a social and political being-what Jalil Muntaquim termed, a bit too generously, as "a major contradiction ... between the Black underground and ... Euro-American [revolutionary] forces~'37 The inability of the Human's political discourses to think gratuitous freedom is less indicative of a "contradiction" than of how anti-Blackness subsidizes Human survival in all its diversity.Giventhis state of affairs, the only way the Black can be imagined as an agent of politics is when she or he is crowded out of politics**.** Politics, for the Black, has as its prerequisite some discursive move which replaces the Black void with a positive, Human, value. Thus, if the Black is to be politically within the world, rather than against the world, she or he only reflects on politics as an ontologist, pontificates about politics as a pundit, or gestures politically as an activist or revolutionary, to the extent that she or he is willing to be structurally adjusted**.** Since exploitation and alienation's grammar of suffering has crowded out the grammar of suffering of accumulation and fungibility-whipped a police action on it-the Black can only meditate, speak about, or act politically as a worker, as a postcolonial, or as a gay or female subject-but not as a Black object. One might perform an "anthropology of sentiment" on the Black and write "ontological" meditations, political discourse, or agitate politically, based on how often the Black feels like a man, feels like a women, feels like a gendered subject, feels like a worker, or feels like a postcolonial, and those feelings are important, but they are not essential at the level of ontology. They cannot address the gratuitous violence which structures what is essential to Blackness and suffering, and they are imaginatively constrained in their will**:** they cannot imagine the kind of violence the Black must harness to break that structure. There is nothing in those Black sentiments powerful enough to alter the structure of the Black's seven-hundred-year-long relation to the world**,** the relation between one accumulated and fungible thing and a diverse plethora of exploited and alienated Human beings. In other words, there are no feelings powerful enough to alter the structural relation between the living and the dead**,** not if feelings are pressed into the service of a project which seeks to bring the dead to life**.** But one can imagine feelings powerful enough to bring the living to death. Whenever Black people walk into a room, spines tingle with such imagination. Will they insist on a politics predicated on their grammar of suffering or will they give us a break and talk about exploitation and alienation? Will they pretend to join the living or will they make us join the dead? The work of exploitation and alienation labors to make politics both possible and impossible., It is a two-pronged labor: it must both animate the political capacity of the Human being and police the political capacity of the Black. In the 1960s and 1970S, cinema benefited from the specter of the BLA'S power to wrench the question of political agency from the grasp of the Human being. Transposed by the ethical dilemmas of the Slave, the question of political agency began to go something like this: What kind of imaginative labor is required to squash the political capacity of the Human being so that we might catalyze the political capacity of the Black? If one were a Gramscian, the word hegemony would spring to mind, and from that word, the political ontologist would begin to meditate on and brainstorm around various ethical dilemmas implied in the phrase hegemonic struggle. This, of course, would be ontologically and ethically misguided, because struggles for hegemony put us back on the terrain of Human beings-the ground of exploited and alienated subjects-whereas we need to think this question on the terrain of the accumulated and fungible object. Again, a more appropriate word than hegemony is murder**.** If, when caught between the pincers of the imperative to meditate on Black dispossession and Black political agency, we do not dissemble, but instead allow our minds to reflect on the murderous ontology of chattel slavery's gratuitous violence-seven hundred years ago, five hundred years ago, two hundred years ago, last year, and today, then maybe, just maybe, we will be able to think Blackness and agency together in an ethical manner. This is not an Afrocentric question. It is a question through which the dead ask themselves how to put the living out of the picture**.**

#### Coalitions replicates anti-blackness – junior partners extend civil society rather than destroy it.

Wilderson **03[[9]](#footnote-7)**

**THERE IS SOMETHING ORGANIC TO BLACK POSITIONALITY THAT MAKES IT ESSENTIAL to the destruction of civil society.** There is nothing willful or speculative in this statement, for one could just as well state the claim the other way around: There is something organic to civil society that makes it essential to the destruction of the Black body. **Blackness is a positionality of “absolute dereliction”** (Fanon), **abandonment, in the face of civil society**, **and therefore cannot establish itself**, or be established, **through hegemonic interventions**. **Blackness cannot become one of civil society’s** many **junior partners**: **Black citizenship**, **or Black civic obligation**, **are oxymorons**. In light of this, **coalitions and social movements**, even radical social movements like the Prison Abolition Movement, **bound up in the solicitation of hegemon**y, so as **to fortify and extend the interlocutory life of civil society**, **ultimately accommodate only the satiable demands and finite antagonisms of civil society’s junior partners** (**i.e., immigrants, white women, and the working class), but foreclose upon** the **insatiable demands and endless antagonisms of the prison slave and the prison-slave-in-waiting. In short**, whereas such **coalitions and social movements cannot be called the outright handmaidens of white supremacy**, **their rhetorical structures and political desire are underwritten by a supplemental antiBlackness.** In her autobiography, Assata Shakur’s comments vacillate between being interesting and insightful to painfully programmatic and “responsible.” **The expository method of conveyance accounts for this air of responsibility**. **However**, toward the end of the book, she accounts for **coalition work** by way of **extended narrative as opposed to exposition**. We accompany her on one of Zayd Shakur’s many Panther projects with outside groups, work “dealing with white support groups who were involved in raising bail for the Panther 21 members in jail” (Shakur, 1987: 224). With no more than three words, her recollection becomes matter of fact and unfiltered. She writes, “I hated it.” At the time, i felt that anything below 110th street was another country. All my activities were centered in Harlem and i almost never left it. Doing defense committee work was definitely not up my alley.... i hated standing around while all these white people asked me to explain myself, my existence. i became a master of the one-liner (Shakur, 1987: 224). Her hatred of this work is bound up in her anticipation, fully realized, of all the zonal violations to come when a white woman asks her if Zayd is her “panther...you know, is he your black cat?” and then runs her fingers through Assata’s hair to cop a kinky feel. **Her narrative anticipates these violations-to-come at the level of the street, as well as at the level of the body. Here is the moment in her life as a prison-slave-in-waiting**, which is to say, a moment as an ordinary Black person, when she finds herself among “friends” — abolitionists, at least partners in purpose, and yet she feels it necessary to adopt the same muscular constriction, the same coiled anticipation, the same combative “one-liners” that she will need to adopt just one year later to steel herself against the encroachment of prison guards. The verisimilitude between Assata’s wellknown police encounters, and her experiences in civil society’s most nurturing nook, the radical coalition, raises disturbing questions about political desire, Black positionality, and hegemony as a modality of struggle.

#### As debaters, we aren’t policymakers or political activists but simply pedagogues in intellectual discussion—the role of the ballot is to vote for the debater that offers the best liberation strategy for black bodies. The act of an unflinching paradigmatic analysis allows us to deny intellectual legitimacy to the compromises that radical elements have made because of an unwillingness to hold moderates feet to the fire predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis.

Wilderson 10**[[10]](#footnote-8)**

STRANGE ASit might seem, this book project began in South Africa. During the last years of apartheid I worked for revolutionary change in both an underground and above-ground capacity, for the Charterist Movement in general and the ANC in particular. During this period, I began to see how essential an unflinching paradigmatic analysis is to a movement dedicated to the complete overthrow of an existing order. The neoliberal compromises that the radical elements of the Chartist Movement made with the moderate elements were due, in large part, to our unwillingness to hold the moderates' feet to the fire of a political agenda predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis. Instead, we allowed our energies and points of attention to be displaced by and onto pragmatic considerations. **Simply put**, we abdicated the power to pose the question—**and the power to pose the question is** the greatest power of all. Elsewhere, I have written about this unfortunate turn of events *(Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid),*so I'll not rehearse the details here. Suffice it to say, this book germinated in the many political and academic discussions and debates that I was fortunate enough to be a part of at a historic moment and in a place where the word revolution was spoken in earnest, free of qualifiers and irony. For their past and ongoing ideas and interventions, I extend solidarity and appreciation to comrades Amanda Alexander, Franco Barchiesi, Teresa Barnes, Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai, Nigel Gibson, Steven Greenberg, Allan Horowitz, Bushy Kelebonye (deceased), Tefu Kelebonye, Ulrike Kistner, Kamogelo Lekubu, Andile Mngxitama, Prishani Naidoo, John Shai, and S'bu Zulu.

#### The only ethical demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm

Wilderson 10**[[11]](#footnote-9)**

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks.[[12]](#endnote-3) One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible.[[13]](#endnote-4) Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows

# Performativity 1NC

#### The act of using performative/narrative strategies tries to articulate Anti-Blackness through experiences rather than structures. This falls into the white supremacist notion of the desire to know or understand the suffering of the other. Their framing articulates anti-blackness as white on black violence rather than something that is structural. Misrepresents social death and dooms aff solvency

**Sexton[[14]](#footnote-10)**

In recent years, social death has emerged from a period of latency as a notion useful for the critical theory of racial slavery as a matrix of social, political, and economic relations surviving the era of abolition in the nineteenth century, "a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago." **This "afterlife of slavery**," as Saidiya Hartman terms it, **challenges practitioners** in the field **to question the prevailing understanding of a post-emancipation society and to revisit** the most basic **questions about the structural conditions of anti-blackness** in the modern world. To ask what it means to speak of **"the tragic continuity between slavery and freedom"** or **"the incomplete nature of emancipation"**, indeed **to speak of** about a type of **living on that survives** **after** a type of **death**. For Wilderson, the principal implication of slavery's afterlife is to warrant an intellectual disposition of "**afro-pessimism**," a qualification and **a complication of the assumptive logic of black** cultural studies in general and black **performance studies in particular**, **a disposition that posits a political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the Human in a constitutive way. This** critical move **has been misconstrued as a negation of the agency of black performance, or even a denial of black social life**, and a number of scholars have reasserted the earlier assumptive logic in a gesture that hypostatisizes afro-pessimism to that end. [17] What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of "The Case of Blackness" and the **black optimism** it **articulates against** a certain **construal of afro-pessimism** **is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology** **only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in "the stance of the pathologist" in relation to black folks**. [18] I say **this not only because** there is, in this version **of** events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology **("fetishization," "obsession," "repetition,"),** **but also because** **there is** at the heart of **the matter a rhetorical question** that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker's benefit: "So why is it repressed?" The "**it" that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of** **obsessional neurosis is the understanding**, which is also to say the **celebration**, **of the ontological priority** or previousness **of blackness relative to the anti-blackness that establishes itself against it,** a priority or previousness that is **also termed "knowledge of freedom"** **or**, pace Chandler, **comprehension of "the constitutive force of the African American subject**(s)" (Chandler 2000: 261). What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism "knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification" associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a re-inscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it. [19] In a way, what we're talking about relates not to a disagreement about "unthought positions" (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about "unthought dispositions" (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a "generalized impropriety" so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door. [20] **Without** sufficient **consideration** **of the gap between statement and enunciation** here, **to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture,** the **discourse** of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only **seem like a "tragically neurotic" instance** **of "certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death"** (Moten 2007: 9). [21] Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak – as negation and impossibility – as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that **they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal**. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon's sustained engagement **with Fanon finds him situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic anti-black world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism** emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that "**there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to 'be' black** – **not in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of anti-blackness on a global scale.** Against the raceless credo, then, racism cannot be rejected without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world" (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to 'be' black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon?

#### The 1AC assumes a causal link between the emancipation of the black body and the Aff’s Performance. This is a problematic understanding of the semantics of death. The Violence is structural and can’t be articulated through performance. Trying to do so only reifies black death.

**Wilderson 09[[15]](#footnote-11)**

**When a group** comprised primarily **of African**-derived “**people**”—yes, the scare quotes matter—**gather at the intersection of performance and subjectivity**, **the result is** often not a renewed commitment to practice or an explicit ensemble of questions, but rather a **palpable structure of feeling**, a **shared sense that violence** and captivity are the grammar and ghosts of our every gesture. **This** structure of feeling **is palpable** even **in** the **place**-names “Africa” and “the Caribbean,” names **whose articulation** (grammar) **and memory** (ghosts) **would not be names at all were it not for the trade in human cargo**. **The promise of sense and meaning,** when these place-names are spoken, **is imbricated in the syntax and morphology of structural violence.** **Isolation of its performative and episodic instances** (the violent event) often **robs us of our ability to see it as a grammar of emergence and being**: the Maafa, or African Holocaust, as the condition for the emergence of African being, just as grammar conditions the emergence of speech. We know the apparitions: ghosts of lost ancestors whom Ghanaiansmourn each year at the sea when they mark the Maafa on their side of the Atlantic; the strange surnames on this side, haunted by the memory of names unknown; that empty space between children and their grandparents where the scourge of AIDS walks in silence; civil wars and famines induced by “natural” disasters like World Bank policies and U.S. intervention—one need not name each and every ghost to remind oneself of their omnipresence. **No other place-names depend upon such violence.** **No other nouns owe their integrity to this semiotics of death**. **Meditations on African performance and subjectivity are always already spoken by this grammar and haunted by these ghosts**. For whatever “Africa” means when spoken by Africans, whatever it means in **the moment of performance**,that **cannot change Africa’s paradigmatic relation** **to other place-names and the people of those places**. **Performance cannot reconcile this gap between the place of slaves and the places of all others.** For me, the most striking thing about any gathering of people that interprets art through the African diaspora is the force with which this grammar and these ghosts irrupt within and at the margins of the proceedings. But their force is no guarantor of clarity. It is often unspoken, like grammar, or without verifiable substance, like ghosts. The harvest can be as mystifying as it is clarifying. The Conference on African and Afro-Caribbean Performance was no exception. Thoughtfully organized and deftly executed by Professors Catherine Cole of UC Berkeley and Leo Cabranes-Grant of UC Santa Barbara, it was held during 26– 28 September 2008 at UC Berkeley and assembled an impressive array of scholars and performance artists from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States who participated in panel discussions, a film screening, performances, and readings on dance, drama, community theatre, the links between social justice and performance, rituals, religious events, diasporas, carnival, and intercultural barterings. These included notable scholars such as Ngu˜gı˜ wa Thiong’o, Sandra Richards, Gerard Aching, Tejumola Olaniyan, and internationally acclaimed performance artists like Alseny Soumah of Les Ballets African (who led a workshop on West African dance), South African actress and opera singer Pauline Malefane (Carmen in U-Carmen e-Khayelitsha, a modernday version of Bizet’s opera filmed and set in Cape Town’s Khayelitsha township and screened at the conference), and master kamele ngoni1 player Mamadou Sidibe (acclaimed for his transformation of Malian hunters’ sacred melodies into a music of philosophical observation and political reflection). The presence of such notables did not crowd out papers and presentations by graduate students and lesser-known academics. This speaks to the conference’s spirit of inclusion and the democratic impulse through which it was conceived and organized. When it concluded, ten members of the University of California Multicampus Research Group (MRG) on International Performance and Culture met to reflect upon and critique not only the conference but also three articles proposed for this edition of Theatre Survey. 2 This column is a hybrid offering of notes from the MRG session and my own assessment of the ensemble of questions raised by the conference. Members of the MRG appreciated how the sweeping generalizations that have smothered many a conference were checked by thick description and microanalysis, as in Gerard Aching’s keynote, “At the Threshold of Visibility: Liberalism and Populism in Trinidad Carnival,” in which he meditated on a ten-second video clip that began with an erotic dance encounter (aka “winding”) between two black Trinidadian men during Carnival, and ended with shots of the spontaneous, homophobic gestures of passersby. **Aching’s illustration of the irreconcilability between a dance** encounter that is “normally” the purview of an individual reveler or heterosexual couple **and** prevailing **notions of freedom** that **cannot accommodate the act of “deliberately calling attention to oneself as a scandalizing subject at carnival”** **did more than describe the encounter and catalog reactions.** It juxtaposed ethnographic and historical knowledge about Trinidad’s struggle against Western imperialism with a critique of intrablack social and political strategies to protest and disable marginalization. It differed from many of the papers and presentations in its explicit attempt to stage a relay between the singularity of a moment of performance and a larger conceptual framework or ensemble of questions. MRG members noted that this absence of articulation on the part of many other papers was a problem. But, having expressed our desire for there to have been “more theory,” we found ourselves turned back on the question, whose theory?—which is to say, what constitutes rigor, knowledge, and value, and can these questions ever be divorced from the force of the grammar and ghosts which converge whenever “Africa” is spoken? A major conceptual framework that underwrote the conference was “diaspora,” so much so that a plenary panel and a roundtable were devoted to it. **The conviction with which** the concepts of **diaspora and performance** **were** **sutured evinced a collective belief in the analytic integrity** of this suture **and** a **collective faith** **in the promise it holds for social change**. A related theme of the conference was the impact of specific performances as sites of and strategies for local resistance. This included papers on the AIDS pandemic and communitybased theatre; the politics of contemporary African performance in the United Kingdom; theatre as a mode of intervention in postelection, violence-torn Nairobi; dance and the representation of intra-African genocide; performers who refused to play Sun City during apartheid; and the transformative power of graffiti in the slums of Dakar. The conference was seeking, not always explicitly, not always consciously, the grammar with which to address the ghosts that haunted it. **But all too often it was seduced by an overvaluation of performance art’s sociopolitical effectiveness**. **Having delineated the methods, syntax, and social context of a given performance or performance practice, a speaker would make a leap of faith and assert a causal link between the performance and the emancipation of the black people who produced and consumed i**t—**as though art** **was the very essence of**, rather than an accompaniment to, **structural change**. Such assertions were typically hobbled by a mix of rhetorical registers, one analytic, the other sentimental—with the sentimental register going unacknowledged as such, and often hastily tagged on at the end of a paper or conversation. **This substitution of sentiment for analysis mystifies instead of clarifies the grammar and ghosts of Africa’s structural violence, a structural violence that is not analogous to that of Asians, working-class Europeans, or Latinos. Attention to it problematizes the articulation between performance and emancipation.**

#### We Must reject the Aff’s Anthropology of sentiment. We need to directly focus on black structural violence

**Wilderson’10[[16]](#footnote-12)**

The prescriptive register, on the other hand, might be called the Nat Turner syndrome. Blacks articulate and ruminate on these ensembles of questions, in hushed tones, in back rooms, quietly, alone, or sometimes only in our dreams. Save for a select few films like Up Tight!, The Lost Man, The Spook Who Sat by the Door, and Jamaa 189 Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms Fanaka’s Soul Vengeance, this ensemble of questions rarely found its way into the narrative coherence of a screenplay. Even in Haile Gerima’s Bush Mama, one gets the sense that whereas Burnett’s cinematography and Gerima’s editing and acoustic innovation acknowledge the gratuitousness of violence that structures the chaos of Black life and simultaneously structures the relative calm of White life, the screenplay, on the other hand, insists on contingent and commonsense notions of police brutality and therefore is only willing or able to identify policing in the spectacle of police violence (e.g., Luann being raped) and not in the everyday banality of ordinary White existence. Still this is a shift, a breakthrough, and we have every reason to believe that this cinematic breakthrough finds its ethical correspondence not in the archive of film history but in actions such as those taken by the BLA and by random, angry, and motivated Black people who were emerging all across America at this time with just a brick and a bottle and certainly no more than a rifle and a scope. As sites of political struggle and loci of philosophical meditation, cultural capacity, civil society, and political agency give rise to maps and chronologies of loss and to dreams of restoration and redemption**.** The Marxist, postcolonial, ecological, and feminist narratives of loss followed by restoration and redemption are predicated on exploitation and alienation as the twin constitutive elements of an essential grammar of suffering**.** They are political narratives predicated on stories which they have the capacity to tell—and this is key—regarding the coherent ethics of their time and space dilemmas**.** The Slave needs freedom not from the wage relation, nor sexism, homophobia, and patriarchy, nor freedom in the form of land restoration**.** These are part and parcel of the diverse list of contingent freedoms of the “multitudes**”** (Hardt & Negri, Empire). Slave needs freedom from the Human race, freedom from the world. The Slave requires gratuitous freedom. Only gratuitous freedom can repair the object status of his/her flesh, which itself is the product of accumulation and fungibility’s gratuitous violence. But what does the Slave’s desire for gratuitous freedom mean for the Human’s desire for contingent freedom? This difference between contingent freedom and gratuitous freedom brings us to Bush Mama and the specter of the BLA, to the irreconcilable imbroglio between the Black as a social and political being and the Human as a social and political being—what Jalil Muntaquim termed, a bit too generously, “a major contradiction… between the Black underground and…Euro-American [revolutionary] forces” (109). The inability of the Human’s political discourses to think gratuitous freedom is less indicative of a “contradiction” than of how anti-Blackness subsidizes Human survival in all its diversity. Given this state of affairs, the only way the Black can be imagined as an agent of politics is when s/he is crowded out of politics. Politics, for the Black, has as its prerequisite some discursive move which replaces the Black void with a positive, Human, value**.** Thus, if the Black is to be politically within the world, rather than against the world, s/he only reflects upon politics as an ontologist, pontificates about politics as a pundit, or gestures politically as an activist or revolutionary, to the extent that s/he is willing to be structurally adjusted**.** Since exploitation and alienation’s grammar of suffering has crowded out the grammar of suffering of accumulation and fungibility— whipped a police action on it—the Black can only meditate, speak about, or act politically as a worker, as a postcolonial, or as a gay or female subject—but not as a Black object**.** One might perform an “anthropology of sentiment” on the Black and write “ontological” meditations, political discourse, or agitate politically, based on how often the Black feels like a man, feels like a women, feels like a gendered subject, feels like a worker, or feels like a postcolonial, and those feelings are important; but they are not essential at the level of ontology**.** They cannot address the gratuitous violence which structures that which is essential to Blackness and suffering, and they are imaginatively constrained in their will: they cannot imagine the kind of violence the Black must harness to break that structure**.** There is nothing in those Black sentiments powerful enough to alter the structure of the Black’s 700-year-long relation to the world, the relation between one accumulated and fungible thing and a diverse plethora of exploited and alienated human beings. **In other words,** there are no feelings powerful enough to alter the structural relation between the living and the dead**,** not if feelings are pressed into service of a project which seeks to bring the dead to life**. But** one can imagine feelings powerful enough to bring the living to death. Whenever Black people walk into a room, spines tingles with such imagination. Will they insist upon a politics predicated on their grammar of suffering or will they give us a break and talk about exploitation **and alienation? Will they pretend to join the living or will they make us join the dead?** The work of exploitation and alienation labors to make politics both possible and impossible. It is a two-pronged labor: it must animate the political capacity of the Human being while at the same time police the political capacity of the Black**.** In the 1960s and 1970s, cinema benefited from the specter of the Black Liberation Army’s power to wrench the question of political agency from the grasp of the Human being. Transposed by the ethical dilemmas of the Slave, the question of political agency 192 Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms began to go something like this: what kind of imaginative labor is required to squash the political capacity of the human being so that we might catalyze the political capacity of the Black? If one were a Gramscian, the word “hegemony” would spring to mind, and from that word, the political ontologist would begin to meditate on and brainstorm around various ethical dilemmas implied in the phrase “hegemonic struggle.” This, of course, would be ontologically and ethically misguided, because struggles for hegemony put us back on the terrain of Human beings—the ground of exploited and alienated subjects— whereas we need to think this question through not on the terrain of the living exploited and alienated subject, but on that of the accumulated and fungible object**.** Again, a more appropriate word than hegemony is murder. If, when caught between the pincers of the imperative to meditate on Black dispossession and Black political agency, we do not dissemble, but instead allow our minds to reflect upon the murderous ontology of chattel slavery’s gratuitous violence— 700 years ago, 500 years ago, 200 years ago, last year, and today, then maybe, just maybe, we will be able to think Blackness and agency together in an ethical manner. This is not an Afro-Centric question. It is a question through which the dead ask themselves how to put the living out of the picture

#### The only ethical demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm

Wilderson 10**[[17]](#footnote-13)**

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks.[[18]](#endnote-5) One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible.[[19]](#endnote-6) Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows.

# Overviews

## General Overview

#### Civil society exists on the plane of antiblackness – The ontological violence against black bodies cannot be articulated in a normative plane of existence so trying to create reforms such as police brutality or wage inequality doesn’t touch the existence of the black body. Antiblackness is a structural form of gratuitous violence – the black, the antihuman, is in antagonism to the white – the human. The libidinal economy of civil society exists as white consumption of black flesh structured as a result of the Middle Passage when the African body was severed from its kinship and subjectivity and became black – this is social death of the black body. That’s Wilderson. Social death means there is no hope for the black body in civil society because it is structured against it – the destruction is the only hope which means the alt is try or die. Slavery is about the relation of bodies, about who has the power and who does not, not a single event. Slavery exists in different forms from chattel slavery to Jim Crow to the prison industrial complex. Anything created by Blacks within civil society gets whitewashed and coopted, e.g. jazz movements are commoditized and forced to be performed for whites.

#### Extend the Alternative of an orientation towards the end of the world – Wilderson 10 says that posing the question of “should the US exist” fractures the paradigm of civil society becauase radical liberals cannot justify why it should exist. The only ethical demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm

#### The 1AC operates under a politics of hope - a desire to make the world a better place through their reformist action. This continual strive to make the world better is what naturalizes antiblackness and allows for the impacts of gratuitous violence to continue. Any attempt for legal reform is the perfection of slavery – when the slave bows down before the master for rights. That’s Farley.

## Junior Partners

#### Civil society exists on the terrain of antiblackness – The ontological violence against black bodies cannot be articulated in a normative plane of existence so trying to create reforms such as [*1AC policy*] doesn’t touch the existence of the black body. Antiblackness is a structural form of gratuitous violence – the black, the antihuman, is in antagonism to the white, the human. The libidinal economy of civil society exists as white consumption of black flesh structured as a result of the Middle Passage when the African body was severed from its kinship and subjectivity and became black – this is social death of the black body. That’s Wilderson. Social death means there is no hope for the black body in civil society because it is structured against it –the alt is try or die. Slavery is about the relation of bodies, about who has the power and who does not, not a single event. Slavery exists in different forms, morphing from chattel slavery to Jim Crow to the prison industrial complex. Anything created by Blacks within civil society gets whitewashed and coopted, e.g. jazz movements are commoditized and forced to be performed for whites.

#### The 1AC is a struggle of junior partners – humans who are marginalized and struggle for recognition and inclusion within civil society.

You have conceded the distinction between gratuitous and contingent violence – Contingent violence, like the aff, is violence between persons - conflict based on [*LGBTQ/class/ability*].

Gratuitous violence is violence enacted on those who have already been deemed less than human – the critical test for contingent violence is a connection connection to culture, norms, the connection to the symbolic – this was which was severed in the middle passage. [Their oppressed group] came out and they still maintained identity – while Africans were taken onto slave ships as Africans and came out as ‘black’ and thus are socially dead.

This means 1) my impacts outweigh your impacts because they are a question of gratuitous violence and 2) blackness is a precondition on which these other violence happen. [Gender, queer, class, etc] oppression is a junior partner of civil society that functions on top of the violence of antiblackness.

# Links

## Gender

#### They describe women as someone that becomes dehumanized and objectified—this fluidity of switching in and out of the category of the human is something the black lacks and the analogization of women as being outside the category of human actively obscures the original violence of slavery

Broeck 08 Sabine, Acting President of the Collegium for African American Research at the University of Bremen, Germany, “Enslavement as Regime of Western Modernity: Re-reading Gender Studies Epistemology Through Black Feminist Critique,”]

The point I want to make is not that African societies did not organize themselves around different cultural social and economic interpellations for men and women, neither that in new world slavery, and colonial societies female beings were not subjected to particular politics and practices most importantly - rape, and the theft of motherhood. However, as Spillers has argued, and as Hartman's texts illuminate, enslaved African-origin female beings never qualified as women (because of their non-humanness, it followed logically) in the Euro-American modern world and therefore were not interpellated to partake in the ongoing social construction and contestation of gender. The point I do want to make is that gender - a category that would have enabled a black female claim on social negotiations did not apply to 'things', to what was constructed as and treated as human flesh. Moreover, that very category gender emerged in western transatlantic rhetoric precisely in the context of creating a space for white women, who refused to be treated like slaves, like things. Modern gender, with early modern feminism, constituted itself discursively precisely in the shift from 18th century female abolitionist Christian empathy with the enslaved to the paradigmatic separation of women from slaves, a process that repeated itself in the late 19th century American negotiations of, and between, abolitionism and suffrage. The fact that black women have - in their long history in the western transatlantic world - consistently fought for an access to the category gender to be able to occupy a space of articulation at all, most famously, of course, in 19th century Sojourner Truth's angrily subversive exclamation "Am I not a woman and a sister?", does not alter the structural complicity of gender as a category with the formation of the sovereign modern white self. That is to say to have, or to be of female gender which could claim and deserved certain kinds of rights, and treatment, staked the claim of white 18th century women to full human subjectivity, as opposed to thingness. The infamous and very persistent use of the analogy of women and slaves (Broeck) provided a springboard for white women to begin theorizing a catalogue of their own demands for an acknowledgement of modern, free subjectivity as antagonistic to enslavement; as a discursive construct, then, modern gender served the differentiation of human from property. White Feminism and gender theory have thus played active roles in the constitution of modern societies as we know them that need far more reflection in shaping and negotiating the expectations of how to do gender properly, even in its critical modes - roles that were claimed rather rarely in conjunction with, or based on an acknowledgment of black people's agency. To me, the corruption inherent in this history demands a bracketing of the category gender, a coupling of it to that history to lose its innocence. Making this kind of connection will also support Gender Studies to go beyond the epistemologically restrictive gender-race analogy which fired white female abolitionism - an ideological position that is untenable for gender studies in a de-colonial moment. (White) Gender Studies may decide to reflect self-critically on its own embeddedness in the Enlightenment proposal of human freedom which strategically split a certain group of humans, namely enslaved African-origin people, from the constitutive freedom to possess themselves and as such, from any access to subjectivity, which entailed, as Hortense Spillers above all has argued, a splitting of African-origin women from gender. If, thus, the knowledge of the slave trade and slavery will become the site of a re-reading of Enlightenment, modernity and postmodernity, a revised theoretical, and material approach to an epistemology of emancipation like Gender Studies will be possible. Gender Studies, too, lives "in the time of slavery," in the "future created by it" (Hartman 2007, 133). It is the economic, cultural and epistemic regime of human commodification, that transgressive nexus of violence, desire and property which first formed the horizon of the Euro-American modernity that US and European intellectuals, including Gender Studies, have known and claimed. The Enlightenment's proposal of human subjectivity and rights which was in fact inscribed into the world the slave trade and slavery had made (Blackburn), created a vertical structure of access claims to self-representation and social participation from which African-origin people, as hereditary commodities, were a priori abjected. It is on the basis of that abjection, that the category of woman, of gender as a framework to negotiate the social, cultural and economic position of white European women was created. To accept that the very constitution of gender as a term in European early modernity was tied to a social, cultural and political system which constitutively pre-figured "wasted lives," and an extreme precariousness of what constitutes human existence, throws contemporary notions of gendered subjectivity into stark relief. Hartman's work, therefore, may be read as just as axiomatic as Bauman's, Butler's or Agamben's in measuring postmodern global challenges to critical theory. Elaine Scary's, Susan Sontag's interventions on pain and voyeurism, and Spillers' or Wood's considerations, more specifically, on the sexualized campaigns of Anglo-American abolition, have compounded the challenge for an epistemology of slavery as a modern episteme not to recycle abolitionist titillation - the risk to become part of a second order abolitionist discourse must, however, be run. To play an active role in the project of decolonizing (post)modern critical theory, gender studies need to acknowledge and reckon with black de-colonial feminist interventions beyond add-on approaches. Those interventions will enable an epistemic turn away from the solipsistic quasi universal presentism of much of contemporary theory, and make it answerable to its own indebtedness to the history of early modern Europe, and the New World. Hartman's and Spiller's texts, as well as Morrison's writing become something like deconstructive guides: we are being asked to look, and listen with black women's perspectives - but at the same time the texts fold back on themselves, and thus on our reading; they disrupt a smooth appropriation of suffering, they derail us from a swift hate for the Thistlewoods (Mother, 61). Those texts under scrutiny here do enact a kind of self-conscious parasitism, forcing readers into complicity - but they refuse to do it innocently, disrupting a renewed take on slavery by way of abolitionist benevolence. They teach readers that the boundaries of the archive cannot be trespassed at will, and without consequence; and they also teach us to respect what Hartman calls, with Fred Moten, "black noise" (2008, 12). "I, too, live in the time of slavery" - is a statement not yet widely enough echoed; gender theory needs to expose itself to the demands of modern history. At a time of rampant takeover by globalized forces of neo-liberalism, for (white) gender studies theory the challenge is to achieve agony instead of complicity with the corporate projects and, particularly in Europe, with the recent onset of a rampant eulogizing of Europe as the mythical ground of universal freedom. This urgency of the modern past as postmodern present may be shored up against all too flippant deployments of Agamben's, Bauman's or Butler's respective terms of "precarious lives" - terms which need to be reloaded with their entire modern history. (White) critical gender theory, as much as it has been a modern critical agent in the negotiation of patriarchal power, has also partaken in the violence of discursive formations that produced the disposable lives of "black flesh".Black women writers like Hartman, Spillers or Morrison argue for creating or maintaining - in the face of much postmodern indifference or abandon - a particular "relationship to loss". Their work, as formulated most clearly by Hartman, calls for a "redress project" which challenges white reading communities - in the present case, a reading public trained in gender studies, that is - to go beyond the confines of gender. To re-arrive in the time of slavery calls for a political orientation in support of "fugitive justice," in Best and Hartman's words, to interrogate rigorously the kinds of political claims that can be mobilized on behalf of the slave (the stateless, the socially dead, and the disposable) in the political present. [...] [W]e are concerned neither with 'what happened then' nor with 'what is owed because of what happened then,' but rather with the contemporary predicament of freedom, with the melancholy recognition of foreseeable futures still tethered to the past. [...] [W]hat is the story about the slave we ought to tell out of the present we ourselves inhabit -- a present in which torture isn't really torture, a present in which persons have been stripped of rights heretofore deemed inalienable? (Best and Hartman, 3, 4) Hartman (and her co-author, Stephen Best) have outlined a series of questions for the Redress Project, the most important in my context being the following: · What is the violence particular to slavery? [...] What is the essential feature of slavery: (1) property in human beings, (2) physical compulsion and corporal correction of the laborer, (3) involuntary servitude, (4) restrictions on mobility or opportunity or personal liberty, (5) restrictions of liberty of contract, (6) the expropriation of material fruits of the slave's labor, (7) absence of collective self-governance or non-citizenship, (8) dishonor and social death, (9) racism? We understand the particular character of slavery's violence to be ongoing and constitutive of the unfinished project of freedom. · What is the slave -- property, commodity, or disposable life? · What is the time of slavery? Is it the time of the present, as Hortense Spillers suggests, a death sentence reenacted and transmitted across generations? (Best and Hartman, 5) 18 For the still largely white gender studies academic community in Europe to adopt itself to the redress project means a re-location into the time of slavery, into a genealogical continuum which reaches from the early modern period into postmodernity. This kind of "bracketing" gender might result in an expansion of urgently needed sites of cross-racial alliance, for gender studies to find a position from which to share not only postcolonial melancholia but also transcultural conviviality, as Paul Gilroy has recently phrased it. This conviviality requires white critical communities to read black women writers/critics work not as ethnography, but as lessons in decolonization itself. Working through Fred Moten's In The Break, Hartman postulates: By throwing into crisis "what happened when" and by exploiting the "transparency of sources" as fictions of history, I wanted to make visible the production of disposable lives (in the Atlantic slave trade and, as well, in the discipline of history), to describe "the resistance of the object," if only by first imagining it, and to listen for the mutters and oaths and cries of the commodity, trying to narrate "the time of slavery as our present," to "imagine a future in which the afterlife of slavery has ended," and finally, to move beyond "the ongoing state of emergency on which black life remains in peril. (2008, 11, 12) Euro-American modern societies created the paradox of dehumanized but at the same time racialized and hyper-sexualized group of about 12 million people at the locomotive disposal of white ownership. As black writers have insisted for generations, and Hartman's work confirms yet again, this transatlantic moment of early modernity amply qualifies as the first instance of "the lager." Beyond an innocence of 'gender' as a category rooted in a narrative of universal freedom, the political point that Gender Studies needs to adjust itself to is to trace its own story as much to a story of the realization of subjectivity as to a story of abjection, and foundational commodification of black human beings.

#### Africans went into the middle passage as bodies and emerged from the holds of the ships as flesh, as black. The distinction of body & flesh represent the same distinction between the captive & liberated subject positions. Their grammar of suffering does not account for the corpse of a murder victim, it accounts for bodies but not flesh. Gendering participates in a drama of value the resignifies humanity and always sidelines blackness, one that is always void, this is done through the typical white feminist who assumes that all “humans” have bodies and that analysis of the relation between white and black have an analog in gender relations.

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Above I suggested that Seshadri-Crooks, by way of Butler, contradicts my assessments. This is imprecise: in point of fact, she is simply mute in the face of my assessments. Again, the drama of value that Butler imagines is one in which gender stands in as a reified form that masks the hybridity of bodies. The body then**,** or rather disparate bodies,is a basic "always already" forButler, Seshadri-Crooks, andmost feminism (this includes the feminism of film theory). Granted, though it appears in her assessment as the smallest scale of cartographic coherence, it nonetheless appears as—and herein lies the rub!—a capacity for spatiality and temporality possessed universally by all. But surely Judith Butler, a White American, if not Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, an East Indian, must recall that Africans went into the hold of ships as bodies and emerged from the holds of those ships as "flesh." **"**I. . . make a distinction . . . between 'body' and 'flesh' and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. In that sense, before the 'body' there is the 'flesh**,'** that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography.**"**42 For the body's reification of genderto constitute an essential grammar of suffering there must first be a body there.Feminism, Marxism, and film studies must provide and account for a corpus delicti, the corpse of a murder victim. One would think that true rigor demands some, however short, nod to that historical process through which Black flesh was recomposed as a body before one can write about a universal template called "the body" which can perform and contest gender in dramas of value**.** In other words, what "event" (what coherence of time) reinstated Black corporeal integrity (reinstated cartographic coherence) so that philosophers and film theorists (and Marxists, filmmakers, and White feminists) could imagine Blackness as possessing the capacity to be staged in dramas where bodily stylization is repeated—where value reifies as gender? This burden of proof is on the Master, not the Slave. Lacan, Silverman, Negri, Hardt, Butler, Heath, Marc Forster and company must make that case to Fanon, Spillers, Patterson, Hartman, Marriott, Judy, and Mbembe. I . . . suggest that "gendering" takes place within the confines of the domestic, an essential metaphor that then spreads its tentacles for male and female subjects over a wide ground of human and social purposes [that ground being civil society]. Domesticity appears to gain **its** power by way of a common origin of cultural fictions that are grounded in the specificity of proper names, more exactly, a patronymic, which, in turn, situates those subjects that it covers in a particular place**.** Contrarily**,** the cargo of a ship might not be regarded as elements of the domestic**,** even though the vessel that carries the cargo is sometimes romantically personified as "she." The human cargo of a slave vessel—in the effacement and remission of African family and proper names—contravenes notions of the domestic. . . . Under these conditions, one is neither female, nor male, as both subjects are taken into account as quantities.43 Until one can demonstrate how the corporeal integrity of the Black has indeed been repaired, "a political genealogy of gender ontologies" which "blow[s] apart the sex-gender-desire nexus .. . [and thus] permits resignific[es]ation of identity as contingency" is a political project the Slave can only laugh at, or weep at. But whether laughing or weeping (for the Slave's counterhegemonic responses are of no essential value and have no structural impact), the Slave is always sidelined by such "resignification of [Human] identity."Resignification of an identity which never signified— an identity void of semiotic play—is nothing to look forward to.Here, an unforgivable obscenity is performed twice over: first, through thetypical White feminist gesture that assumes all women (and men) have bodies, ergo all bodies contest gender's drama of value; and, second, by way of the more recent, but no less common, assertions that the analysis of "relations" betweenWhite and Black has a handy analog in the analysis of gendered relations. Indeed, for such intellectual protocols to transpose themselves from obscenities to protocols truly meaningful to the Slave (in other words, for their explanatory power to be essential and not merely important), the operative verbs, attached to what Butler calls "the . . . forces that police," would have to be not mask and redact but murder. "Identity" may very well be "the investiture of name, and the marking of reference"44—and here is where the postcolonial subject and the White subject of empire can duke it out (if, in the process, they would leave us alone!)—but Blackness marks, references, names, and identifies a corpse. And a corpse is not relational because death is beyond representation, and relation always occurs within representation.What is the "it" beyond representation that Whiteness murders? In other words, what "evidence" do we have that the violence that positions the Slave, is structurally different from the violence inflicted on the worker, the woman, the spectator, and the postcolonial? Again, as I demonstrated in part 1, the murdered "it" is capacity par excellence, spatial and temporal capacity. Marxism, film theory, and the political common sense of socially engaged White cinema think Human capacity as Butler and Seshadri-Crooks do, as universal phenomena. But Blacks experience Human capacity as a homicidal phenomenon. Fanon, Judy, Mbembe, Hartman, Marriott, Patterson, and Spillers have each, in his or her own way, shown us that the Black lost the coherence of space and time in the hold of the Middle Passage. The philosophy of Judith Butler, the film theory of Kaja Silverman, Mary Ann Doane, and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, the Marxism of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, the social optimism or pessimism of popular film reviews, and the auteurial intention of the director Marc Forster all leave the Slave unthought. They take as given that the Black has access to dramas of value. But each disparate entity in any drama of value must possess not only spatiality (for even a patch of grass exists in space), but the power to labor on space, the cartographic capacity to make place—if only at the scale of the body. Each disparate entity in any drama of value must possess not only temporality (for even a patch of grass begins-exists-and-is-no-more) but the power to labor over time: the historiographic capacity to narrate "events"—if only the "event" of sexuality. The terrain of the body and the event of sexuality were murdered when the African became a "genealogical isolate."45 Thus, the explanatory power of the theorists, filmmaker, and film reviewers cited above, at its very best, is capable of thinking Blackness as identity or as identification**,** conceding, however, as the more rigorous among them do, that "black and white do not say much about identity, though they do establish group and personal identifications of the subjects involved."46 But even this concession gets us nowhere. At best, it is a red herring investing our attention in a semiotic impossibility: that of the Slave as signifier. At worst, it puts the cart before the horse, which is to say that no Marxist theory of social change and proletarian recomposition, and no feminist theory of bodily resignification, has been able (or cared) to demonstrate how, when, and where Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. Yet, they remain, if only by omission, steadfast in their conviction that slavery was abolished. At moments, however, the sensory excess of cinema lets ordinary White film say what extraordinary White folks will not.

practices as criminal, queer, nationally polluting, and pathological.15\

#### Male and female identities are European constructs which identified Gender is a concept created out of a European epistemology, solidified through the violence of colonialism and propogated through slavery – the 1AC fails to “uproot” the systemic nature of anti-blackness

Thomas 5**[[20]](#footnote-14)**

Uprooting white imperialist politics of gender and sexuality here may present a unique set of intellectual problems. While certain U.S. norms or ideals may be criticized as racist, they are more rarely criticized as Western or European in origin or outlook. Barbara Bush’s “‘The Family Tree Is Not Cut’: Women and Cultural Resistance in Slave Family Life in the British Caribbean” (1986) casually affirms, “It was in the interest of the planters to promote myths of the instability of the slave family, for this justi¤ed the exploitation and separation of slaves,” who sustained “viable family forms based on African rather than European values” (126–27). Though Bush is preoccupied with proving a lack of promiscuity or immorality in her slaves, as if these evaluations were not culturally specific themselves, she directly identi¤es racism and white supremacy with Occidentalism. Merle Hodge’s “The Shadow of the Whip: A Comment on MaleFemale Relations in the Caribbean” (1974) similarly confirms a “West African matriarchalism [in] the Caribbean and indeed Black America on the whole” (116). The hegemony of the West is not ignored when Hodge inveighs against the accepted ideal of white womanhood, contending, “the revaluation of black womanhood inevitably also implies a restoration of black manhood, when the black man no longer forcibly evaluates his women by the standards of a man who once held the whip over him. It is one stage of his liberation from the whip hand” (118). If the essential vocabulary of gender is retained, the denunciation of racism does not eclipse the fact of cultural conflict from Hodge’s vision. Blacks are never reduced to a social effect of some monolithic nation-state complex outside of Africa. It is not that this kind of analysis has not come forth under U.S. colonization in North America. It simply does not come forth with the support of academic commerce or colonial intellectual nationalism. Yet the standardization of European sexual categories knows no geopolitical boundaries. Hilary Beckles’s “Sex and Gender in the Historiography of Caribbean Slavery” (1995) is interesting in this respect. His engagement with wellknown texts by Barbara Bush, Kamau Brathwaite, Arlette Gautier, Barry Higman, Lucille Mair, Verena Martinez-Alier, Bernard Moitt, and Marietta Morrissey leads Beckles to comment, “the post-structuralist assertion that the term woman is but a social construct that has no basis in nature has struck no central nerve, an insensitivity which says a great deal about the theoretical state of this recent historiography” (126). This statement is curious for several reasons, not the least of which is that Beckles includes his own name on the list of figures who ignore this naturalization of sex in the study of gender. The brief and odd reference to post-structuralism seems designed to scold the colonies for something like theoretical underdevelopment. But why should the demystification or denaturalization of sex and gender be classified as post-structuralist, always and automati-cally? On what elusive de¤nition would post-structuralism be responsible for Toni Cade Bambara’s “On the Issue of Roles” or Oyèrónké Oyêwùmí’s The Invention of Women, for example? The “Derrida and Foucault” invoked by Beckles produce no such analysis of white racist gender or sexualities of imperialism; nor have any of their disciples, as a matter of fact. Furthermore, pronouncing something to be a social construct is not the same thing as perceiving it to be a culturally specific, Western bourgeois social construct. What is at stake in this discussion cannot be confined by any genealogy of European intellectualism (i.e., structuralism versus post-structuralism). It is a matter of colonialism and anti-colonialism, slavery and anti-slavery, imperialism and anti-imperialism. Between British settler colonialism in the northern Americas and contemporary U.S. empire, the white racist madness of manhood and womanhood is reinforced in the past by academic literature composed in the present, even as Black radical traditions continue to erode this distinction between then and now. This is how the old world order of settler colonialism reconfigures itself in the new world order of neo-colonization. Thus, supplementing Bambara and Oyêwùmí is Sylvia Wynter’s body of work on the global expansion of Western humanism—in graphically gendered terms: So we now see these categories emerging that had never existed before—whites who see themselves as true men, true women, while their Others, the untrue men/ women, were now labeled as indio/indias (Indians) and as negros/negras. . . . You see, I am suggesting that from the very origin of the modern world, of the Western world system, there were never simply men and women. (Wynter 2000, 174) These ultimately bourgeois conceptions (along with the heterosexuality to which they give birth) are all uncritically consolidated by conventional writing on enslaved Africans. When the particular form or content of this gender and sexuality cannot be found, their necessity is not then challenged; instead, their form and content are imposed in any possible manner, by any possible means. The contemporary U.S. domination of anti-Black, white-supremacist Occidentalism is thus naturalized or renaturalized via the culturally and historically specific categories of manhood and womanhood as well as homosexuality and heterosexuality. And enslavement to them can be presented as emancipation, once again.

Focus on freedom from the patriarchy only continues the antiblackness of humanism. We focuses on the structure that created the 1AC’s impacts Wilderson 10**[[21]](#footnote-15)**

**Black slavery is foundational to** modern **Humanism’s ontics because “freedom” is the hub of Humanism’s** infinite **conceptual trajectories**. But these trajectories only appear to be infinite. They are finite in the sense that they are predicated on the idea of freedom from some contingency that can be named, or at least conceptualized. **The contingent rider could be freedom from patriarchy**, freedom from economic exploitation, freedom from political tyranny (for example, taxation without representation), freedom from **heteronormativity**, and so on. What I am suggesting is that first, **political discourse recognizes freedom as a structuring ontologic and then** it works to **disavow this recognition by imagining freedom not through political ontology**—where it rightfully began—**but through political experience** (and practice); whereupon it immediately loses its ontological foundations. Why would anyone do this? Why would anyone start off with, quite literally, an earth-shattering ontologic and, in the process of meditating on it and acting through it, reduce it to an earth reforming experience? **Why do Humans take** such **pride in self-adjustment**, in diminishing, rather than intensifying, the project of liberation (how did we get from ’68 to the present)? Because, I contend, **in allowing** the notion of **freedom to attain the ethical purity of its ontological status, one would have to lose one’s Human coordinates and become Black**. Which is to say **one would have to die**. **For the Black, freedom is an ontological**, rather than experiential, question. There is no philosophically credible way to attach an experiential, a contingent, rider onto the notion of freedom when one considers the Black—such as freedom from gender or economic oppression, the kind of contingent riders rightfully placed on the non-Black when thinking freedom. Rather, **the riders that one could place on Black freedom would be** hyperbolic—though no less true—and ultimately **untenable**: i.e., freedom from the world, freedom from humanity, freedom from everyone (including one’s Black self). Given the reigning episteme, what are the chances of elaborating a comprehensive, much less translatable and communicable, political project out of the necessity of freedom as an absolute? Gratuitous freedom has never been a trajectory of Humanist thought, which is why the infinite trajectories of **freedom that emanate from Humanism’s hub** are anything but infinite—for they **have no line of flight leading to the Slave.**

#### The framework of these liberatory gender movements is predicated around the understanding that its members are person. The performance of gender under the regime of captivity is only an extension of the master’s prerogative.

Wilderson 10**[[22]](#footnote-16)**

"Stylization of the body," "acts within a ... regulatory frame that congeal over time," "the appearance of substance," "a natural sort of being," "reifications"—such notions mark gender as the arbiter between disparate entities: gender as a value-form. A value-form that masks and redacts. Seshadri-Crooks applauds Butler's surgical strike because it can "unmask the relations of necessity" posited by power and show them to be "purely contingent." Borrowing Butler's protocol for her work on race, Seshadri-Crooks then asks, "Is there any 'sense' to naming someone black or white?" This is a rhetorical way of saying that "one's critical task ... is to eliminate the modality of necessity and install in its place the contingency of all relations."37 But her transposition of Butler's protocols from the unmasking of gendered relations to a project of unmasking relations between Black and White runs aground both in theory and in practice. Let me sum up my objections to this passage by starting at the end. There is no such narrative as a political genealogy and there is no such entity as a "gender[ed] ontology" unless the subject under discussion is not Black. Furthermore, "gender ontology" is an oxymoron marked by analytic imprecision because it collapses and confuses the social and performative with the structural and positional. In other words, it collapses and confuses the important with the essential. Throughout this book I insist on pressing the social and performative into analytic service of the structural and positional; not vice versa, and certainly not back and forth on some plane of horizontal significance. If the work of Afro-pessimists like Saidiya Hartman can be read not only as cultural history but also as "allegor[ies] of the present... narrative[s] for the slave,"38 then the Afro-pessimists' skepticism as regards the explanatory power of the analyses bound to the social and performative functions as a spanner in the works of Butler's "political genealogy of gender ontologies” Is it possible to consider, let alone imagine, the agency of the performative when the black performative is inextricably linked with the specter of contented subjection, the torturous display of the captive body, and the ravishing of the body that is the condition of the other's pleasure? As well, how does one explicate the conditions of slave agency when the very expression seems little more than an oxymoron that restates the paradox of the object status and pained subject constitution of the enslave**d**? How is it possible to think "agency" when the slave's very condition of being or social existence is defined as a state of determinate negation? In other words, what are the constituents of agency when one's social condition is defined by negation and personhood refigured in the fetishized and fungible terms of the object of property?39

#### At the heart of the liberatory subject on whose behalf the affirmative advocates is an unwavering anti-black stance that sutures the very being of that subject through its investment in and distancing from the violence beyond the limit levied on black folks.

Wilderson ’10 FRANK B. WILDERSON 2010(Professor of African America Studies and Drama at UC Irvine, Red White and Black)

"Motherhood as female birthright," Spillers recalls, "is outraged, is denied [Black women] at the very same time that it becomes the founding term for [White women's] human and social enactment." Spillers reinforces this point when she says that for the Black woman "mother' and enslavement' are indistinct categories," synonymous elements which define "a cultural situation that is father-lacking." Fortunati understands the sexual rubric differently, writing, "Within reproduction, the exchange [of labor power] takes place on three different levels. It, too, is an exchange of nonequivalents between unequals, but it does not appear even formally as an exchange that is organized in a capitalist way. Rather, it is an exchange that appears to take place between male workers and women, but in reality takes place between capital and women with male workers acting as the intermediaries."31 For Fortunati, capital has the female subject ensconced within a symbolic illusion in which it appears that the reproductive subject (mother/wife) confronts the productive subject (father/husband) when in fact they are both productive subjects confronted by capital. And the sooner they both realize it, the sooner they can get on with the workers' revolution. The same counterhegemonic, antiillusionary tactics that animate social movement theory and alternative cinema are implied in Fortunati's analysis. However, gratuitous violence relegates the Slave to the taxonomy, the list of things. That is, it reduces the Slave to an object. Motherhood, fatherhood, and gender differentiations can only be sustained in the taxonomy of subjects. A reading of Italian feminist thought through Spillers reminds us that the foundation of all White feminist thought maintains its coherence not primarily through a conscious understanding of how the White female body is exploited, but through the unconscious libidinal understanding that, no matter how bad exploitation becomes, the White body can never fall prey to accumulation and fungibility: "Simple enough one has only not to be a nigger."32 In this way, the most radical White politics function as the patrols did during slavery. Like the grand emancipatory rhetoric of the American Revolution, White feminism is inessential to and parasitic on the grammar of Bush Mama's suffering. It polices and crowds out Dorothy's and Bukhari-Alston's ethical dilemmas because its emancipatory imperative is predicated on a refusal to relinquish its body to the ripped-apartness of Bush Mama's Black flesh. For Black people, the structure of essential antagonisms cannot be attributed, as Fortunati attributes it, to the illusory nature of the reproductive sphere (laws like STEP incarcerate "Black home" with scare quotes) where the woman's subordination to patriarchal capital is brought on by the illusory mystification of her mother-to-child, wife-to-husband relations (mystified and illusory because, as Fortunati would have it, the objective conditions of the woman's oppression stem from the fact that her waged relation to capital is hidden by capital). On the contrary, the ontological core of Black suffering is not lost in a labyrinth of production posing as a reproduction posing as natural motherhood. Nor, at the core of Black suffering, is the Black woman's (or man's) ontology erroneously gendered by patriarchal castration fears and masculine desire as in an Oedipal drama. For the production of Black suffering, as Spillers notes, no such hall of mirrors is necessary: "Gender, or sex-role assignation or the clear differentiation of sexual stuff, sustained elsewhere in the culture [i.e., available to White and non-Black women], does not emerge for the African-American female in this historic instance [an "instance" which Spiller reminds us spans from the Middle Passage to the Moynihan Report to the present] except indirectly, except as a way to reinforce through the process of birthing 'the reproduction of the relations of production.'" Spillers goes on to acknowledge the symmetry between the Black woman and Fortunati's working-class mother/wife, in that the birthing process is indeed one of the first steps in the reproduction of the relations of production. In other words, like White mothers, Black mothers, if they can be called mothers, can also help Black babies reproduce both themselves and the values and behavior patterns necessary to maintain civil society's system of hierarchy. But Spillers steadfastly insists that although Black CINEMATIC UNREST 137 "mothers" indeed experience the same "naturalized" attachments to their children (and to their partners) as mothers of the working class, the Black woman cannot "claim her child."33 Black children do not belong to Black mothers (or fathers), just as Black men and women don't belong to, and thus cannot claim, each other: flesh is always already claimed by direct relations of force. As a result, the conflicts that arise between the disparate ideological elements within civil society (i.e., the White Left and the White Right) ultimately strengthen White solidarity within the libidinal economy. The greater the intensity of the conflict, the more intense the unconscious reminder of what they can all agree on: that bodily reification and mutilation is not one of their dilemmas. It's a Black thing. And when this unconscious agreement is made available to speech and therefore becomes conscious, it is displaced onto a myriad of investments—one may call it environmentalism, multiculturalism, pacifism, or feminism, but I call it anti-Black policing.

## Indigenous

#### There is an ontological difference between slavery and colonialism – we must prefigure slavery in order to understand the ways in which whiteness has dispossessed the Savage – the concept of the law is irredeemable once properly understood for black agency is only ever conceivably legal when it is criminal – the struggle for indigenous liberation is always appropriative of black struggle in a violent analogization that erases black agency

Sexton 10**[[23]](#footnote-17)**

That is to say, in the debate about the colonial policy of assimilation and its discontents, a debate in which Mannoni and Fanon intervene respectively, it is slavery and the particular freedom struggle it engenders that mark the critical difference. Slavery: that which reduces ‘colonial peoples to a molten state’ uniquely enabling the metropolitan power ‘to pour them into a new mold’, a process in which ‘the personality of the native is first destroyed through uprooting, enslavement, and the collapse of the social structure’ (Mannoni 1990: 27). For Mannoni, ‘assimilation is only practicable where an individual has been isolated from his group, wrenched from his environment and transplanted else- where’ (Mannoni 1990: 27, emphasis added). Fanon’s historical materialist redaction of Mannoni’s psychology of the colonial relation is to refuse the latter’s projection of the ‘affective disorders’ produced by colonization into a pre-colonial cultural eternity. Not so much, perhaps, because such projection would have the Malagasy desire her own colonizer (like the Inca who Mannoni suggests desires her own conquistador in an earlier historical period), but because the contradictions of colonization might provide an even more problematic recommendation for ‘the introduction of slavery’ (Mannoni 1990: 27). To suffer the loss of political sovereignty, the exploitation of labor, the dispossession of land and resources is deplorable; yet, we might say in this light that to suffer colonization is unenviable unless one is enslaved. One may not be free, but one is at least not enslaved. More simply, we might say of the colonized: you may lose your motherland, but you will not ‘lose your mother’ (Hartman 2007). The latter condition, the ‘social death’ under which kinship is denied entirely by the force of law, is reserved for the ‘natal alienation’ and ‘genealogical isolation’ characterizing slavery. Here is Orlando Patterson, from his encyclopedic 1982 Slavery and Social Death: I prefer the term ‘natal alienation’ because it goes directly to the heart of what is critical in the slave’s forced alienation, the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations. It also has the important nuance of a loss of native status, of deracination. It was this alienation of the slave from all formal, legally enforceable ties of ‘blood,’ and from any attachment to groups or localities other than those chosen for him [sic] by the master, that gave the relation of slavery its peculiar value to the master. The slave was the ultimate human tool, as imprintable and as disposable as the master wished. And this was true, at least in theory, of all slaves, no matter how elevated. (Patterson 1982: 7–8) True even if elevated by the income and formal education of the mythic American middle class, the celebrity of a Hollywood icon, or the political position of the so-called Leader of the Free World. 4 The alienation and isolation of the slave is not only vertical, canceling ties to past and future generations and rendering thereby the notion of ‘descen- dants of slaves’ as a strict oxymoron. It is also a horizontal prohibition, canceling ties to the slave’s contemporaries as well. Reduced to a tool, the deracination of the slave, as Mannoni and Fanon each note in their turn, is total, more fundamental even than the displacement of the colonized, whose status obtains in a network of persecuted human relations rather than in a collection or dispersal of a class of things. Crucially, this total deracination is strictly correlative to the ‘absolute submission mandated by [slave] law’ discussed rigorously in Saidiya Hartman’s 1997 Scenes of Subjection: the slave estate is the most perfect example of the space of purely formal obedience defining the jurisdictional field of sovereignty (Agamben 2000). Because the forced submission of the slave is absolute, any signs whatsoever of ‘reasoning … intent and rationality’ are recognized ‘solely in the context of criminal liability’. That is, ‘the slave’s will [is] acknowledged only as it [is] prohibited or punished’ (Hartman 1997: 82, emphasis added). A criminal will, a criminal reasoning, a criminal intent, a criminal rationality: with these erstwhile human capacities construed as indices of culpability before the law, even the potentiality of slave resistance is rendered illegitimate and illegible a priori. The disqualification of black resistance by the logic of racial slavery is not unrelated to the longstanding cross-racial phenomenon in which the white bourgeois and proletarian revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic can allegorize themselves as revolts against slavery, while the hemispheric black struggle against actually existing slavery cannot authorize itself literally in those same terms. The latter must code itself as the apotheosis of the French and American revolutions (with their themes of Judeo-Christian deliverance) or, later, the Russian and Chinese revolutions (with their themes of secular messianic trans- formation) or, later still, the broad anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America of the mid-20th century (with their themes of indigenous reclamation and renaissance). 5 One of the defining features of contemporary political and intellectual culture remains this metaphoric transfer that appropriates black suffering as the template for non-black grievances, while it misrecognizes the singularity of black struggles against racial slavery and what Loïc Wacquant calls its ‘functional surrogates’ or what Hartman terms its ‘afterlife’. Put differently, ‘the occult presence of racial slavery’ continues to haunt our political imagination: ‘nowhere, but nevertheless everywhere, a dead time which never arrives and does not stop arriving’ (Marriott 2007: xxi). Hartman’s notion of slavery’s afterlife and Wacquant’s theorization of slavery’s functional surrogates are two productive recent attempts to name the interminable terror of slavery, but we are still very much within the crisis of language – of thinking and feeling, seeing and hearing – that slavery provokes. Both scholars challenge the optimistic idea of a residual ‘legacy’ of slavery, precisely because it requires the untenable demarcation of an historic end in Emancipation. The relations of slavery live on, Hartman might say, after the death knell of formal abolition, mutating into ‘the burdened individuality of freedom’.The functions of the chattel system are largely maintained,Wacquant might say, despite the efforts of Reconstruction, preserved in surrogate institutional form under Jim Crow, the ghetto, and the prison. Slavery lives on, it survives, despite the grand attempts on its institutional life forged by the international movements against slavery, segregation and mass imprisonment (Davis 2003). But what if slavery does not die, as it were, because it is immortal, but rather because it is non-mortal, because it has never lived, at least not in the psychic life of power? What if the source of slavery’s longevity is not its resilience in the face of opposition, but the obscurity of its existence? Not the accumulation of its political capital, but the illegibility of its grammar? On this account, for those that bear the mark of slavery – the trace of blackness – to speak is to sound off without foundation, to appear as a ghost on the threshold of the visible world, a spook retaining (only) the negative capacity to absent the presence,ornegatethewilltopresence,ofeveryclaimtohumanbeing,evenperhapsthefugi- tive movement of stolen life explored masterfully by Fred Moten (2008). We might rethink as well the very fruitful notion of ‘fugitive justice’ that shapes the prize-winning 2005 special issue of Representations on ‘Redress’. Co-editors Saidiya Hartman and Stephen Best are posing the right question: ‘How does one compensate for centuries of violence that have as their consequence the impossibility of restoring a prior existence, of giving back what was taken, of repairing what was broken?**’** (Hartman and Best 2005: 2) That is to say, they are thinking about ‘the question of slavery in terms of the incomplete nature of abolition’, ‘the contemporary predicament of freedom’ (2005: 5, emphasis added). Yet, the notion subsequently developed of a fugitive life ‘lived in loss’ – spanning the split difference between grievance and grief, remedy and redress, law and justice, hope and resignation – relies nonetheless on an outside, however improbable or impossible, as the space of possibility, of movement, of life. Returning to our schematization of Fanon, we can say that the outside is a concept embedded in the problématique of colonization and its imaginary topography, indeed, the fact that it can imagine topographically at all. But, even if the freedom dreams of the black radical imagination do conjure images of place (and to do here does not imply that one can in either sense of the latter word: able or permitted); what both the fact of blackness and the lived experience of the black name for us, in their discrepant registers, is an anti-black world for which there is no outside. 6 ‘The language of race developed in the modern period and in the context of the slave trade’ (Hartman 2007: 5). And if that context is our context and that context is the world, then this is the principal insight revealed by the contemporary predicament of freedom: there is no such thing as a fugitive slave. Malcolm X, by another route, was not far from this formulation in his famous ‘The Ballot or the Bullet’ address, delivered 3 April 1964 at the Cory Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. Speaking to the risks of political confrontation with the structures of racial domination, he exhorts: ‘If you go to jail, so what? If you black, you were born in jail. If you black, you were born in jail, in the North as well as the South. Stop talking about the South. Long as you south of the Canadian border, you’re south.’ For blacks in the USA, the political borders of the nation-state mark the walls of a social incarceration, a political ontology of race uninterrupted by ontic differences of region or legal standing. Of course, Malcolm X did not restrict his commentary to the USA**,** even if recent devel- opments in national electoral politics were the focus of this particular address. His evolv- ing analysis accommodated a much larger geographical scale, what he elsewhere designated ‘white world supremacy’. But if there is any weight to his insistence that the Mason-Dixon Line, demarcating the territories of a still unresolved civil war, or even the prison wall, constituting liberal democracy’s internal hard edge, are incidental to black life – this from a former prisoner of over six years – should we not extend this reasoning to the ultimate penalty, the absolute master, and stop talking about death as the limit of black life? Not a loss (of life and limb, liberty and property), but a never having had. Not only the figurative ‘nothing to lose but your chains’ of the proletariat, but the literal inability to lose (because unable to own, to accumulate, to have and to hold, to self-possess) at all. Can’t have (even when we got), can’t be (even when we are): a strange freedom in the heart of slavery. ‘The political ontology of race’ is a phrase borrowed from work of political theorist Frank B. Wilderson, III, where it has been elaborated from his 2003 Social Identities article, ‘Gramsci’s Black Marx’, to his 2008 American Book Award-winning memoir, Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid, and his forthcoming Red,White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms. Drawing heavily upon Gordon and Fanon, alongside the early Patterson, the ongoing research of Wacquant on the four ‘peculiar institutions’ that have ‘operated to define, confine, and control African Americans in the history of the United States’ (Wacquant 2002: 41), and an array of noted literary critics and historians (e.g. David Eltis, Lindon Barrett, Saidiya Hartman, Ronald A.T. Judy, David Marriott, Hortense Spillers); Wilderson supplants the paradigm of comparative ethnic and racial studies in two principle ways. First, by moving conceptually from the empirical to the structural, especially insofar as the question of differential racialization – or the compli- cations of racial hierarchy – makes recourse to a comparative sociology, measuring relative rates of infant mortality, poverty, illiteracy, high school graduation, hate crimes, impris- onment, electoral participation, and so on. Second, by reframing racism (pace Fanon) as a social relationship that is grounded in anti-blackness rather than white supremacy. What Wilderson demonstrates at length is that ‘the racialization n of the globe’ (Dikötter 2008) or the formation of the ‘world racial system’ (Winant 2002) does not adhere strictly to Du Bois’s thesis on the color line – ‘the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men [sic] in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea’ – in which ‘Negro slavery’ is referred to as but one ‘phase’ of a general problem. Rather, slavery establishes the vestibule of the category of the Human. To be sure, Humans do not live under con- ditions of equality in the modern world. In fact, modernity is, to a large degree, marked by societies structured in dominance: patriarchy and white supremacy, settler colonialism and extra-territorial conquest, imperialist warfare and genocide, class struggle and the international division of labor. Yet, for Wilderson, there is a qualitative difference, an ontological [difference] one, between the inferiorization or dehumanization of the masses of people ‘in Asia … in America and the islands of the sea’, including the colonization of their land and resources, the exploitation of their labor and even their extermination in whole or in part, and the singular commodification of human being pursued under racial slavery, that structure of gratuitous violence in which bodies are rendered as flesh to be accumulated and exchanged**.** 7 On this score, we should note that ‘the absolute submission mandated by law was not simply that of slave to his or her owner, but the submission of the enslaved before all whites’ (Hartman 1997: 83). The latter group is perhaps better termed all non-blacks (or the unequally arrayed category of non-blackness), because it is racial blackness as a necessary condition for enslavement that matters most, rather than whiteness as a sufficient condition for freedom. The structural position of the Indian slaveholder – or, for that matter, the smattering of free black slaveholders in the USA or the slaveholding mulatto elite in the Caribbean – is a case in point (Blackburn 1997; Koger 2006; Miles and Holland 2006). Freedom from the rule of slave law requires only that one be considered non-black, whether that non-black racial designation be ‘white’ or ‘Indian’ or, in the rare case, ‘Oriental’ – this despite the fact that each of these groups have at one point or another labored in conditions similar to or contiguous with enslaved African-derived groups. In other words, it is not labor relations, but property relations that are constitutive of slavery.

## Queer Theory

#### Queer politics are founded upon the progressive narrative pioneered by whiteness—the claim that it gets better is inaccessible to the black body because there is no mobility when blacks people are structurally positioned below human—means the affirmative only recreates anti-blackness

Bassichis 14**[[24]](#footnote-18)**

Cue the gay remix! Gay and lesbian claims to imperiled domesticity, privacy, and kinship (popular in earlier homophile organizing but renewed with a fervour since the 1990s) illustrate the capaciousness of white supremacy to mutate these key 'founding’ figures—now it is the wounded white gay citizen who requires state inclusion and protection to ensure his successful reproduction.These claims, remember, come amidst and in the wake of ongoing efforts from the right wing to cathect gayness to pathology, murder and non-reproductivity (Bersani 1987: 197-222; Delany 1994; Sontag 1989) - qualities usually reserved for blackness - with the emergence of HIV /AIDS. A few illustrations of the powerful mobilization of white futurity within contemporary gay and lesbian politics are useful. First, we point to the widely popular 'It Gets Better' project, started by author Dan Savage and his husband Terry Miller in response to a series of publicized suicides of queer youth, encouraging teens that life does indeed improve. Thousands of people responded to their initial video by making their own videos sharing this message of future improvement, and eventually over 22,000 videos were collected on the 'It Gets Better' website, including ones created by gay and lesbian police officers and the president of the CS himself (Savage 2013). A book of essays from the project was released in 2011. In the original video, Savage and his husband, two white non-trans gay men, describe their high school years where they faced bullying for being gay. They then describe how their lives got better after high school because their natal families came to accept and include them, they met each other and adopted a child. Savage shares a memory of walking around Paris with their child and Miller talks about their love of and accomplishments at snowboarding as a family. The two earnestly address an audience of 12-17-year old viewers, urging them that their lives will get better after high school. Speaking about bullies and bigots, Savage states ‘Once I got out of high school, they couldn’t touch me anymore.’ The project illustrates how a form of gayness implicitly linked to whiteness and upward mobility stakes its claim to the future. After all, for whom will it get better? And what kind of better does it get? When we consider this directive that life gets better against the backdrop of the systemic imprisonment, police murder and state abandonment of black people at every age, we can see how it is white suffering that this campaign aims to make legible as worthy of protection. Black suffering, as Jared Sexton has articulated in his analysis of Hurricane Katrina (Sexton 2006), is unspectacular, banal, self-induced, a cause for, if anything, shame or fascination, not redress. Savage’s assertion that his departure from high school protected him from the reach of homophobic violence is certainly indicative of a white-owning trajectory of matriculation. What guarantees can be given to those who will remain in the grasp of foster care systems, homeless shelters, psychiatric facilities, jails, prisons, and immigration detention centres, regardless of their Savage's story generalizes a particular narrative in which white queers can 'escape' homophobia by moving to gay enclaves in urban areas, a trajectory out of reach for so many queer and trans people who will remain targets of policing and immigration enforcement, even and perhaps especially in white gay neighbourhoods where they are read as dangerous outsiders (Hanhardt 2008). The fantasy of life 'getting better' imagines 'violence' as individual acts that 'bad' people do to 'good' people who need protection and retribution from state protectors (law enforcement, policymakers, administrators), rather than situating bodily terror as an everyday aspect of a larger regime of structural racialized and gendered violence congealed within practices of criminalization, immigration enforcement, poverty, and medicalization targeted at black people at the population level from before birth until after death and most frequently exercised by government employees. It is not a leap to see, then, how this cultural politics of naturalizing the premature death of black people produces a benevolent thrall for white and lesbians to adopt black children. White gay and lesbian politics must remain silent on anti-black racism, must position itself as anything but black, to keep its place in line for the future.

#### Thinking queerness as an identity, performance obscures the prior ontological queerness of blackness, which exists as the absolute index of otherness over and against which humanity and modernity vouchsafe their value and coherence. This failure to theorize gender and sexuality from the underside of the human is a failure to interrogate the very template of deviance that haunts queerness, ensuring anti-black homonormative identification. Queering isn’t the only way to challenge. Jackson 11[[25]](#footnote-19)

Marriott’s scholarship reminds us that **queer theory may unwittingly diminish its criticality if it fails to acknowledge the role antiblack racism plays in shaping the discursive practices of gender and sexuality. The violence that produces blackness necessitates that from the existential vantage point of black lived experience, gender and sexuality lose their coherence as normative categories**.8 Moreover, **as queer theory attempts to map a territory that encompasses an increasingly generalized nonnormativity, it may unwittingly overlook the function of blackness in modernity**, since the black body has been rendered the “absolute index of otherness.” 9 While particular nonblack sexual and gendered practices may be queered, **blackness serves as an essential template of gendered and sexual “deviance” that is limited to the negation** not of a particular practice but **of a state of being**. In other words, **there are no practices that an individual black person can take up that will settle once and for all the doubt that accompanies the assertion of a black humanity**. Marriott’s texts encourage us to interrogate the subject of feminist and queer theory rather than presume that a subject is always and already there. Marriott’s writing invites us to reflect on aspects of gendered and sexualized racial experience that often go unaccounted for in scholarly work on race, despite the efforts of black feminism and its theories of intersectionality. Feminists of color have encouraged us to think about gender and sexuality as they intersect with the particularities of race and embodiment. In the context of blackness, gender oppression not only circumscribes the life chances of women but also stratifies or suspends the category of manhood.10 Black men are seen as “excessively male and insufficiently masculine.”11 Historically, black men’s “inversion” has served as an alibi for their rape and castration, painful reminders that rape is, as feminists state, “about power” rather than contingent on an essentialized female vulnerability or an inherent male power. **Existential negation, which we refer to as “race” in polite conversation**, substantially complicates our theorization of “black patriarchy” and “black sexuality.” It **requires us to theorize gendered and sexual violence from the underside of “the human,” which arguably necessitates that we think about queerness as something other than an identity, gender, or even set of sexual practices. We might think of black queerness as an existential matter rather than as an attribution that accompanies only some black subjectivities**. Marriott reminds us that nonbeing is the existential burden facing black people under the conditions of (post)modernity and also the specter that haunts queer subjectivity. This is fitting considering that **the birth of “homosexuality” is inextricable from the rise of scientific authority and its racism. Fantasies of blackness,** **particularly black female** **sexuality, are the gendered and racial specters that haunt queerness — that from which homonormative subjects must distance themselves in order to be properly recognized as humans, as citizens, as subjects**. Despite prior interdictions on same-sex sexuality, it is only as recently as the late nineteenth century that sexual acts and desires became constitutive of identity: the homosexual becomes a type.12 In Siobhan Somerville’s “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body,” she queries, “**is it merely a historical coincidence that the classification of bodies as either ‘homosexual’ or ‘heterosexual’ emerged at the same time that the United States was aggressively policing the imaginary boundary between ‘black’ and ‘white’ bodies?**”13 Somerville goes on to suggest the mutually constitutive effects of the bifurcated categories of race and sexuality, their structural interdependence and mutual production. **Structures and methodologies that drove dominant scientific ideologies of race were subsequently taken up in the scientific pursuit of an emerging discourse of sexuality**. Difference was thought to be a visualizable fact inscribed on the body; according to this logic, interiority could be read on the surface of the body’s anatomical markers. Racial difference seemed to hinge on and be most represented by the supposed differences of sexual appetites and anatomies, particularly those of the African female. **Sexologists drew on fantasies of black female embodiment as their model of sexual deviancy and gender nonconformity. Racial comparative-anatomy methods were used to determine sexual definition, with a presumed similitude between “deviant” white bodies and the black body**. The word homosexual itself seemed to conjure some anxieties about miscegenation, as the “barbarously hybrid word” was a mix of Latin and Greek, even referring to “shades of gender” and “sexual half-breeds.” 14 Reading Marriott in the context of feminist and queer theory offers new insight into the gendered and sexualized nature of blackness’s ontological negation, particularly the nonheteronormativity of race’s reproduction. **The negation of blackness is the foundation of ethics and politics**, even **of modern sociality itself; this negation overdetermines black practices as criminal, queer, nationally polluting, and pathological.**15

## Deleuze

#### You can’t just imagine away facial recognition – the idea that certain bodies including previously black ones can escape the objective vertigo through the destruction of the faciality machine only further reifies blackness as the ontological zero point and increases the extermination of blackness

Sexton 08Jared, associate professor of African American studies and film and media studies, “Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism,” 2008, Pages 231-234

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Fredric Jameson (1998b) announced that “the state of things the word globalization attempts to designate will be with us for a long time to come; and . . . its theorization . . . will constitute the horizon of all theory in the years ahead” (xvi). It would thus seem that any intellectual project accompanying the historical movement ofblack liberation—whose intervention sustains the current position of enunciation—must take as central the series of questions posed by the term. We might posit the reverse as well: anyone thinking seriously about globalization, particularly those hoping to organize political resistance to it, cannot afford to elide the question of black liberation without missing something essential to its unfolding. It is my suspicion that this vital consideration, made only more pointed by the ambivalent rendering of race mixture, forces an uncanny encounter with the black body—its capacities, its energies, its appearance as well as its structured installation in the nexus of sexuality and violence. In each case noted previously (the white supremacist movement, the global sex industries, the discourse of multiracialism), it is the image of the black body that throws the apparatus of representation into unmitigated crisis. “The history of racism is a narrative in which the congruency of micro- and macrocosm has been disrupted at the point of their analogical intersection: the human body” (Gilroy 1997, 192). This prescient point, offered by Paul Gilroy in his essay “Scales and Eyes,” bears significantly on the present effort. The body presents a problem, a point of disruption, for the historical narrative of racism. It has failed to lend itself, once and for all, to a stable designation. As Gilroy asks, “Has anyone ever been able to say exactly how many ‘races’ there are, let alone how skin shade should correspond to them” (195)? Of course, the answer is no, but we have seen that the indeterminacy of race in “the order of active differentiation” (192) has not proved insurmountable, even if it is inescapable. Quite the contrary, this perennial difficulty has given rise to a frenetic succession of methods designed for specifying human difference that characterize the protean nature of modernity’s “most pernicious signature” (192). In the current moment, we confront a novel question: “What does that trope ‘race’ mean in the age of molecular biology” (192)? For Gilroy, we now inhabit “a space beyond comparative anatomy” where “the body and its obvious, functional components no longer delimit the scale upon which assessments of the unity and variation of the species are to be made” (194). Our collective estrangement from anatomical scale has rendered the eye inadequate, if it ever was, “to the tasks of evaluation and description demanded” by racial segregation. Thus, the ascendancy of what he terms “nanopolitics” “departs from the scalar assumptions associated with anatomical difference and accelerates a vertiginous, inward movement towards the explanatory power of ever-smaller scopic regimes” (193). Indeed, this one-way movement, “downwards and inwards,” locks the racializing project into a perpetual search for the zero degree of difference. However, if racial difference “cannot be readily correlated with genetic variation” (194), the most basic level of differentiation known to date, at what level can it be asserted, maintained, legitimated? Or is it destined simply to remain anxious and uncertain, forever suspicious? Gilroy is less than sanguine about these developments. Although skepticism about “the status of visible differences” is welcomed for the trouble it causes to the paradigm of comparative anatomy, there is no indication that the calibration of “human sameness” and “human diversity” will diminish in political importance. The frustration of this procedure at one scale does not prevent its seeking refuge by burrowing deeper into the flesh, the viscera, the blood, the DNA. Gilroy asks, “Can a different sense of scale and scaling form a counterweight to the appeal of absolute particularity celebrated under the sign of ‘race’?” “Can it answer the seductions of self and kind projected onto the surface of the body?” Scarcely: the repudiation of surface-level sameness by “the proliferation of invisible differences” remains an object of aggravated fascination insofar as such differences are understood to “produce catastrophic consequences where people are not what they seem to be” (192). We are familiar with the vast literature regarding the thematic of racial passing in and beyond the United States, which often sensationally features the scandal of seeming to be white when one is, “in truth,” something else (Ginsberg 1996; Sanchez and Schlossberg 2001). Today, the fear ofinvisible blackness commingles with the global traffic in hypervisible blackness, the premier consumer product. Across the globe, one can play at blackness, selectively appropriating “everything but the burden,” to borrow Greg Tate’s (2003) apt phrase. Yet, Gilroy’s remarks on the crisis of visible difference invoke another catastrophic consequence not unrelated to an unsuspected or invisible blackness. Visible differences, he notes, not only prove unreliable in determinations of race, they also “do not . . . tell us everything we need to know about the health- status of the people we want to have sex with” (192). They really never did, of course, but Gilroy’s comment here makes reference to another “catastrophic consequence” associated with the age of molecular biology: AIDS. He concludes his essay as follows: With the body figured an epiphenomenon of coded information, this aesthetics of racial difference is now residual. The skin may no longer be privileged as the threshold of identity. There are good reasons to suppose that the line between inside and outside now falls elsewhere. (196) This other threshold of identity, this newly privileged “elsewhere” that now houses the persistent dividing line, is located within the body, tracking an invisible presence that demotes and denotes the significance of the bodily surface. It is**,** in effect, a displacement of the skin as the preeminent sign of race. Here we note a convergence with the project of multiracialism discussed at the outset: for different reasons, both developments portend the obstruction or unraveling of racialization in the field of vision— one betting on the increasing difficulty of making clear discriminations on the surface, the other devaluing the surface altogether. However, nothing in Gilroy’s account alludes to the wholesale replacement of the surface by the interior, wherein the latter simply supplants the former. More likely, we have an augmentation of racial difference, an alloy of the inner and outer, by way of the discourses of biotechnology and genetic science. Similarly, the blurring of the color line prophesied by multiracialism provides the occasion, within the imagination of white supremacy and antiblackness, for a redoubled effort to police it. In this respect, the surface becomes a more intense object of observation precisely because it has become more unreliable as a sign of race

#### Lines of flights can’t escape the structure of anti-blackness – corporeal experience is effaced and becoming is interrupted by the process of racial epidermalization that either results in the black body whitening themself or open to gratuitous violence

Fanon 52Frantz, psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and influential writer in the field of post-colonial studies, “Black Skin White Masks”, 1952, Pages 82-85  
"Dirty nigger!" Or simply, "Look, a Negro!" I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had thought lost, and by taking me out of the world, restoring me to it. But just as I reached the other side, I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye. I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self. As long as the black person is among their own, he will have no occasion, except in minor internal conflicts, to experience their being through others. There is of course the moment of "being for others," of which Hegel speaks, but every ontology is made unattainable in a colonized and civilized society. It would seem that this fact has not been given sufficient attention by those who have discussed the question. In the Weltanschauung of a colonized people there is an impurity, a flaw that outlaws any ontological explanation. Someone may object that this is the case with every individual, but such an objection merely conceals a basic problem. Ontology-once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside-does not permit us to understand the being of the black person. For not only must the black person be black; he must be black in relation to the white person. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black person has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white person. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place herself. Their metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, their customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on them. The black person among their own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment their inferiority comes into being through the other. Of course I have talked about the black problem with friends, or, more rarely, with American Negroes. Together we protested, we asserted the equality of all people in the world. In the Antilles there was also that little gulf that exists among the almost-white, the mulatto, and the nigger. But I was satisfied with an intellectual understanding of these differences. It was not really dramatic. And then… And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white person's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the person of color encounters difficulties in the development of their bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes lying at the other end of the table. The matches, however, are in the drawer on the left, and I shall have to lean back slightly. And all these movements are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge. A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world-such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world-definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world. For several years certain laboratories have been trying to produce a serum for "denegrification"; with all the earnestness in the world, laboratories have sterilized their test tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on researches that might make it possible for the miserable Negro to whiten themself and thus to throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction. Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema. The elements that I used had been provided for me not by "residual sensations and perceptions primarily of a tactile, vestib­ular, kinesthetic, and visual character;" but by the other, the white person who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories. I thought that what I had in hand was to construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations, and here I was called on for more. "Look a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile. "Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me. "Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. '’Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all historicity, which I had learned about from Jaspers. Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other… and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea. . . I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else above all "Sho' good eatin' … On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white person, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a person among other people. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together.

#### Becoming is a political project to relegate the black body to a permanent state of deterritorialized identity marked by difference from the majority, this results in the consumption of otherness

Nealon 98 Professor of English and Philosophy, Penn State University Jeffrey Thomas Nealon, 1998, Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity, Duke University Press, p. 129

And this brings us back to Deleuze and Guattari's odd claim that even blacks must become-black. As they go on to clarify, "if blacks must become-black, it is because only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming, but under such conditions that it ceases to be a definable aggregate in relation to the majority" (Thousand, 291). If indeed we all must become-other, this becoming-other presupposes remaining in a minority status—in a state other than "whole." Becoming-minority is, in other words, a status that "ceases to be a definable aggregate in relation to the majority" because the majority is itself deterritorialized by the minority's repetition with a difference.18 As Baraka writes about the specificity of African American cultures, "Without the dissent, the struggle, the outside of the inside, the aesthetic is neither genuinely Black nor Blue" ("Blues Aesthetic," 109; my italics). The deterritorialization performed by the "Black" aesthetic or the "Blue[s]" tradition deploys directional, conflicted vectors of becoming—the forceful interruptive movement of "the outside of the inside," the minority's alteration of the majority. Both blackness and whiteness are inexorably transformed by the performative movements of becoming-black. / All that having been said, however, we still seem to find ourselves within a familiarly binary vocabulary:even if it is not exactly the opposite of majority reterritorialization, minority deterritorialization seems clearly to be the privileged, good term of active becoming, with the static weight of some chimeric "mainstream" having been left in the dust. So-called whites, it might seem, must simply abandon their whiteness and become-black. But, if this is indeed the case, what get iterated in deterritorialization are the stale platitudes of the twentieth-century white avant-garde, sentiments increasingly translatable into late capital's orientalizing lingo of advertising: calling for site-specific improvisation—deterritorializing lines of flight—seems merely a call to "make it new."

## Infinite Assemblages

#### The uncritical laundry-listing of gender, sexuality, race, class, etc etc reproduces the infinite permutations of Whiteness – it erases the specificity of Blackness and destroys our ability to fight Whiteness – it must be theorized as a larger ensemble, not in its specific manifestations

Wilderson 10**[[26]](#footnote-20)**

The diversity of Whiteness is so profound that there are no fixed, always already, positions within it, no a priori criminality, for example, and no permanent saintliness. Spatial and temporal capacity is so immanent on the field of Whiteness that the effects and permutations of its ensemble of questions and the kinds of White bodies that can mobilize this universe of combinations are seemingly infinite as well: White prostitutes can catalyze a 180-degree ethical reversal (given that prostitution is cinema's role-of-choice for Black women, one would expect—if Blacks and Whites were both structurally alive—these catalytic moments to pop up in every other film!). Even the White dead can hold the White living to account. We are dealing here with a structure whose idiom of power is auto didactic and auto productive: it generates its lessons, its ensemble of questions and their attendant ethical dilemmas, and its institutional ca- pacity, internally, without recourse to bodies or questions beyond its own gene pool. What keeps it from replicating the decline in genetic health experienced when incest takes place in biology is the fact that it is not biological. Whiteness has an infinite ensemble of signified possibilities: The infinite possibilities themselves cannot be definitively named; their dramas of value cannot be predicted with anything approaching precision; nor can the reproduction of these possibilities be threatened with mortality, because Whiteness's internal mutation is limitless. But what can be named, predicted, and put to death is the coherence of the ensemble as an ensemble. And the same thing that guarantees the ensemble's coherence is the thing that threatens its coherence with destruction: the Black.¶ The diversity of Whiteness, its "recovery of difference in a hierarchical and vertical distribution of being," depends on the "laterality" of Blackness to maintain its internal diversity. Hortense Spillers uses the term laterality to mean that whereas Whiteness exists on a vertical plane where the "recovery of difference" is not only guaranteed, but ethically mandated, Blackness exists on a lateral plane where "it [is] possible to rank human with animal." In other words, the taxonomy of things would indeed be dismantled as a taxonomy if "White person" were added to the list; but it would merely be expanded if "Black person" were added to the list. Blacks, broadly speaking, connote a taxonomy of things. As Ronald Judy asks, in a question I used as an epigraph for chapter 1 0 , "Can there be a community' of niggers, as opposed to a 'bunch' or a collection'?" "In effect, the humanity of the African personality is placed in quotation marks under . . . signs" like community.

## Biopower

#### Their assertion that biopolitics is the organizing logic of contemporary violence is based off of a Eurocentric Foucaultian analysis that masks the racialized torture of incarceration.

Rodriguez 06**[[27]](#footnote-21)**

**The prison regime’s twinned technologies of immobilization and bodily disintegration depart drastically from** the virtual and technically disembodied disciplinary technologies of Bentham’s Panopticon or **Foucault’s biopolitical carceral, whose Eurocentric regimes pivot on the** **relative absence or infrequent physical application of direct bodily coercion and punishment. The technology of the current punitive carceral entails a constant, state-structured application of physical and psychological violence, a vectoring of coercion that generally exceeds conventional notions of torture**, encompassing a profoundly sophisticated form of subjection that constantly reshapes the imprisoned body’s form, content, and context. Political prisoner Janet Hollaway Africa, imprisoned since 1978 as one of the MOVE Nine, elaborates how the bodily passage into this relation of direct violence melts away the juridical formality of “the prison,” establishing the political premises for an abolitionist or antisystemic practice.

#### Their conception of power and discipline places erasure on non-white individuals and communities by universalizing operations of power on white bodies as some sort of all incorporating narrative of experience, rendering invisible entire histories of white supremacist slaughter.

James 96**[[28]](#footnote-22)**

Michel **Foucault's** *Discipline and Punish* offers a body politics of state punishment and prosecution that is considered by some postmodernists to be a master narrative competent to critique contemporary state policing. Yet this particular work **contributes to the erasure of racist violence. In respect to U.S. policing and punishment, the metanarrative of *Discipline and Punish* vanquishes historical and contemporary racialized terror, punishments, and control in the United States; it therefore distorts and obscures violence in America in general. By examining erasure in body politics, lynching, and policing; penal executions and torture; and terror in U.S. foreign policy**— issues that Foucault overlooks in his discussion of the history of policing in the United States—**we find visceral spectacles of state abuse**. *Erasure in Body Politics* **Writing about the "disappearance of torture as a public spectacle"—with no reference to its continuity in European and American colonies where it was inflicted on indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas—Foucault weaves a historical perspective that eventually presents the contemporary ("Western") state as a nonpractitioner of torture.*1* His text illustrates how easy it is to erase the specificity of the body and violence while centering discourse on them. Losing sight of the violence practiced by and in the name of the sovereign, who at times was manifested as part of a dominant race, Foucault universalizes the body of the white, propertied male**. Much of *Discipline and Punish* depicts the body with no specificity tied to racialized or sexualized punishment. **The resulting veneer of bourgeois respectability painted over state repression elides racist violence against black and brown and red bodies.** Foucault states that the "historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born" (137). Failing to concretize this "art of the human body," he leaves unaddressed these questions: which body serves as prototype? Who bore this representative model or type? Ostensibly talking about the body while ignoring its uniqueness, Foucault explores issues of policing that are restricted to behavior. If one asserts that the "introduction of the 'biographical' is important in the history of penalty. . . . Because it establishes the 'criminal' as existing before the crime and even outside it" (252), one might also note that the biographical is intricately tied to the biological—that is, the "criminal" is identified not only by his or her act but also by his or her appearance.2 Consider how Foucault's discussion of nonconformity as offense masks the body: What is specific to the disciplinary penalty is non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it. The whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable: the soldier commits an "offence" whenever he does not reach the level required; a pupil's "offence" is not only a minor infraction, but also an inability to carry out his tasks. (178-79) Nonobservance and nonconformity are often understood as biologically determined, given that the departure from the norm shows up not only in behavior but visually in terms of physical characteristics that are racialized**. Foucault's exclusive focus on actions suggests undifferentiated bodies. Physical appearance, however, can be considered an expression of either conformity or rebellion. Because some bodies fail to conform physiologically, different bodies are expected and are therefore required to behave differently under state or police gaze. Greater obedience is demanded from those whose physical difference marks them as aberrational, offensive, or threatening. Conversely, some bodies appear more docile than others because of their conformity in appearance to idealized models of class, color, and sex; their bodies are allowed greater leeway to be self-policed or policed without physical force**. To illustrate: **a white male executive in an Armani suit is considered more docile, civilized, and in need of less invasive, coercive policing than a black male youth in a hooded sweatshirt and off-the-hip baggy** **jeans**. (In contrast, white youths who racially cross-dress— with baseball caps turned backwards, "X" t-shirts, low-riding pants—are generally not aggressively targeted by police who distinguish between fashion consumerism and racial membership.) Noting how physique is constructed as a marker for deviancy and criminality, Frantz Fanon writes in "The Negro and Psychopathology" that the "Negro symbolizes the biological danger. . . . To suffer from a phobia of Negroes is to be afraid of the biological." 3 To fear the black is to fear the body; conversely, to revere the black is to idealize the body. Foucault writes of social fear and policing that are reflected in "binary division and branding," which produces the polarized social entities of the "mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal"; this "coercive assignment" of labeling, categorizing, and identifying places the individual under "constant surveillance" (199). **Foucault**, however, **makes no mention of sexual and racial binary oppositions to designate social inferiority and deviancy as biologically inscribed on the bodies of nonmales or nonwhites**. Therefore, when he reports in *Discipline and Punish* that "the mechanisms of power" are organized "around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him," racial and sexual issues are evaded (199-200). **To write that these mechanisms of dominance rely on the panopticism produced by the disciplinary and exclusionary practices for the "arrest of the plague" and the "exile of the leper**" (which for Foucault respectively represent the dreams of a "disciplined society" and a "pure community") **without considering the role of race in the formation of that disciplined society and pure community is to see the United States through blinders (198). In racialized societies such as the United States, the plague of criminality, deviancy, immorality, and corruption is embodied in the black because both sexual and social pathology are branded by skin color (as well as by gender and sexual orientation**). Where the plague and the leper are codified in the black, for instance, the dreams and desires of a society and state will be centered on the control of the black body. **Binary oppositions and panopticism will thereby be racialized. In binary opposition, antiblack racism has played a critical, historical role in rationalizing** (and inverting) **hierarchies of oppressor and oppressed: crazy/sane, dangerous/harmless, and normal/deviant. Foucault ignores this phenomenon, while other theorists such as Frantz Fanon and Sander Gilman explore it**. Panopticism and the policing gaze are also informed by racial and sexual bias; **the tools for observation and examination that Foucault delineates are constructed within worldviews influenced by racial and sexual mythologies and political ideologies that guide carceral testing**. Foucault's *carceral* refers to a network of regimentation and discipline, a prison without walls in turn made up of social networks for surveillance.

## Heidegger

#### Being-to-death is white death – anti-blackness forecloses the possibility for blacks to “reclaim” their death from the “they”

Trewn 13**[[29]](#footnote-23)**

More than being a Cartesian philosopher in this regard, Heidegger's negligence of colonialism, slavery, and modernity -- all initiated prior to the political crises of the twentieth century -- means he gets to join the ranks of philosophers which constitute a Western tradition of white thought. To further draw out this argument, I bring in two texts from whiteness studies, Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility" and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's "The Invisible Weight of Whiteness: The Racial Grammar of Everyday Life in Contemporary America," in order to explain my conceptualization of 'whiteness'. To summarize, DiAngelo refers to 'White Fragility' as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (54). Bonilla-Silva, in turn, argues that racial domination necessitates a racial grammar which normalizes white supremacy and dominance through sociopolitical regulatory practices (174).1 Then, I refer to 'whiteness' as that which is made visible when the "normal" is questioned and what DiAngelo calls "[t]he insulated environment of racial protection" is shocked into White Fragility. For this conceptualization of 'whiteness' to be more comprehensive, though, we must be able to account for whiteness when it is invisible and silent. In this case, I refer to 'whiteness' as the normalization of white supremacy and white dominance, while racial grammar makes certain ideas intelligible in normalized spaces through a rhetoric of universalism which is intimately bound to power and hegemony. To concretize this theoretical development of whiteness, I borrow the concept "raceocracy" developed by social scientist Barnor Hesse. He uses the terms "raceocracy" to refer to the following: [T]he way in which race orders the political and social lives of people – without being accountable to any spoken or written discourse, simply because it’s performed as a shared social and institutional orientation. In other words, it’s racially performed in such a way that it sustains a broad range of people’s relationships by facilitating conventional aspects of life that everybody appears to agree upon. ("Raceocracy: An Interview with Dr. Barnor Hesse – Part 1.") Through this lens, whiteness as a racial identity is a crucial technology to the structure of race as it simultaneously marks particular bodies as white, affords them certain privileges, and uses these bodies to form and govern racially exclusive white spaces through the largely invisible and silent white gaze, performance of racial governance, and presence/absence of white privilege.2 In other words, my conceptualization of 'whiteness' is constituted by the ordering and governing of bodies in/and space. As such, we can inquire into whiteness not just as a form of racially exclusive society, but also as a form of racial identity. More explicitly, we can consider Heidegger's conceptualization of death as coming from a space of whiteness because of its representation as non-relational, singularizing, and its relation to mastery and subjectivity.I will not belabor this point, because the argument is quite simple and vaguely resembles Lévinas's critique. Heidegger ignores how Western colonial projects -- whether it be those which violently threw Sub-Saharan Africans across the Atlantic Ocean and enslaved them or those which dominated Muslims in French Algeria under quasi-apartheid rule -- stripped its victims of their social and political freedoms and at times subjected them to deaths including lynching, torture, and mass disease. 3 In this context, mastery and subjectivity must be seen as normalized white capabilities. Western colonial projects were driven by the desire to master geopolitical space through (imperial/colonial/violent) exploration and to master the enslaved African body (by way of racescience and plantation organization, for example). The reality of colonialism, slavery, and its relation to mastery and 'full' subjectivity reveals an iteration of death foreclosed by Heidegger's discussion: Death-as-possibility-to-be-killed-socially-and-politically-and-biologically-by-theexperience-of-slavery-and-colonial-violence. Can anyone wrap their hands around that? To stay within Heidegger's approach, being white might be seen as a phenomenological experience. I have revealed the whiteness of Heidegger's death by situating his concept Being-towards-death alongside pre-Holocaust Western colonial projects, and unsettled 'death' in Heideggerian philosophy. Through his un/racial grammar of universality, Heidegger forecloses the possibility of a relational death. Heidegger's death becomes incredibly fragile when supplemented by one word: white. Heidegger's (white) death is social, political, historical, and philosophical violence. While Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi party may have been convoluted, his whiteness certainly was not.

## Ethics

#### Pretending that anti-black agents are capable of moral action is abstraction that makes ethics impossible. Traditional ethics is an anti black system that only serves to re-entrench white supremacy. The only approach available to black bodies is an anti-ethical one.

**Curry[[30]](#footnote-24)**

**Traditional**ly we have taken **ethics** to be, as Henry Sedgwick claims, "any rational procedure by which we determine what individual human beings 'ought'—or what is right for them—or to seek to realize by voluntary action” (1981:1). This rational procedure **is** however **at odds with the empirical reality the ethical deliberation must concern itself with. To argue**, as is often done, **that the government, its citizens, or white people should act justly, assumes that the possibility of how they could act defines their moral disposition.** If a white person could possibly not be racist, it does not mean that the possibility of not being racist, can be taken to mean that they are not racist. In **ethical deliberations** dealing with the problem of racism, it is common practice to **attribute to historically racist institutions, and individuals universal moral qualities that have yet to be demonstrated.** **This abstraction from reality is what frames our ethical norms and allows us to maintain, despite history or evidence, that racist entities will act justly given the choice. Under such complexities, the only ethical deliberation concerning racism must be anti-ethical**, or a judgment **refusing to write morality onto immoral entities.** In the post-structuralist era, post-colonial thinking about racism specifically, and difference/otherness generally, has given a peculiar ameliorative function to **discourse** **and the performance of “other-ed”** identities. **In** **this era, the dominant illusion is that discourse itself** , an act **that requires** as its basis the **recognition** of the **“other” as “similar,” is socially transformative**—not only with **regard to how the white subject assimilates** **the** similitude of the “**other**-ed,” but as an actual activity gauged by the recognition by one white person or by a group of white people in any given scenario, is uncritically accepted and encouraged as anti-racist politics.. In actuality **such discourse** appeals, which **necessitate**—become **dependent on—(white) recognition**, function very much like the racial stereotype, in that the concept of the **Black** body being the **expression** **and** **source of** experience and **phenomena** (existential-phenomenological-theorization) **is incarcerated by the conceptualization created the discursive catalyst yearning to be perceived by the white thing seeing the Black**. **Such appeals lend potentiality-hope-faith to** the already present/demonstrated ignorance-racism-interest of the **white** individual, who in large part expresses the historical tone/epistemology of their racial group’s interest. **When morality is defined, not by the empirical acts that demonstrate immorality, but the racial character of those in question, our ethics become nothing more than the apologetics of our tyrannical epoch.**

#### Putting ethical theories on a pedestal serves only to abstract morality away from oppression and get out of the discussion.

**Matsuda 89** [[31]](#footnote-25)

The multiple consciousness I urge lawyers to attain is not a random ability to see all points of **view**, but a deliberate choice to see **the world from the standpoint of the oppressed**. That world is ac- cessible to all of us. We should know it in its con- crete particulars. We should know of our sister carrying buckets of water up five flights of stairs in a welfare hotel, our sister trembling at 3 a.m. in a shelter for battered women, our sisters holding bloodied children in their arms in Cape Town, on the West Bank, and in Nicaragua. The jurisprudence of outsiders teaches that these details and the emotions they evoke are relevant and important as we set out on the road to justice. These details are accessible to all of us, of all genders and colors. We can choose to know the lives of others by reading, studying, listening, and ventur- ing into different places. For lawyers, our pro bono work may be the most effective means of ac- quiring a broader consciousness of oppression. ¶ **Abstraction and detachment are ways out of the discomfort of direct confrontation with the ugliness of oppression**. **Abstraction**, criticized by both feminists and scholars of color, **is the**, **method that allows theorists to discuss** liberty, property, and **rights** in the aspirational mode of liberalism **with no connection to what those concepts mean in real people's lives**. Much in our **mainstream intellectual training values abstraction and denigrates nitty-gritty detail.** Holding on to a multiple consciousness will allow us to op- erate both within the abstractions of standard jurisprudential discourse, and within the details of our own special knowledge.¶ Whisperings at Yale and elsewhere about how deconstructionist heroes were closet fascists remind me of how important it is to stay close to oppressed communities. **High talk about** language, **meaning**, sign, process, and law **can mask racist and sexist ugliness** if we never stop to ask: "Exactly what are you talking about and what is the implication of what you are saying for my sis- ter who is carrying buckets of water up five flights of stairs in a welfare hotel? What do you propose to do for her today, not in some abstract future you are creating in your mind?" If you have been made to feel, as I have, that such inquiry is theo- retically unsophisticated, and quaintly naive, re- sist! Read what Professor Williams, Professor Scales-Trent, and other feminists and people of color are writing.' The **reality and detail of oppression are a starting point for** these writers as they enter into mainstream debates about law and **theory.**

## Extinction

#### Emphasis on an impending apocalypse as the major danger to human life is a direct effacement of the everyday violence of institutionalized racism – the fiction of uniqueness for their extinction impact can only be establish through a genocidal forgetting of the historical world-ending violence of white supremacy

Omolade 89**[[32]](#footnote-26)**

Recent efforts by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan to limit nuclear testing, stockpiling, and weaponry, while still protecting their own arsenals and selling arms to countries and factions around the world, vividly demonstrate how "peace" can become an abstract concept within a culture of war. Many peace activists are similarly blind to the constant wars and threats of war being waged against people of color and the planet by those who march for "peace" and by those they march against. These pacifists, like Gorbachev and Reagan, frequently want people of color to fear what they fear and define peace as they define it. They are unmindful that our lands and peoples have already been and are being destroyed as part of the "final solution" of the "color line."It is difficult to persuade the remnants of Native American tribes**,** the starving of African deserts, and the victims of the Cambodian "killing fields" that nuclear war is the major danger to human life on the planet and that only a nuclear "winter" embodies fear and futurelessness for humanity. The peace movement suffers greatly from its lack of a historical and holistic perspective, practice, and vision that include the voices and experiences of people of color;the movement's goals and messages have therefore been easily coopted and expropriated by world leaders who share the same culture of racial dominance and arrogance. The peace movement's racist blinders have divorced peace from freedom,from feminism, from education reform, from legal rights, from human rights, from international alliances and friendships, from national liberation, from the particular (for example, black female, Native American male) and the general(human being). Nevertheless, social movements such as the civil rights-black power movement in the United States have always demanded peace with justice, with liberation, and with social and economic reconstruction and cultural freedom at home and abroad. The integration of our past and our present holocausts and our struggle to define our own lives and have our basic needs metare at the core of the inseparable struggles for world peace and social betterment. The Achilles heel of the organized peace movement in this country has always been its whiteness. In this multi-racial and racist society, no allwhite movement can have the strength to bring about basic changes. It is axiomatic that basic changes do not occur in any society unless the people who are oppressed move to make them occur. In our society it is people of color who are the most oppressed. Indeed our entire history teaches us that when people of color have organized and struggled-most especially, because of their particular history, Black people-have moved in a more humane direction as a society, toward a better life for all people.1 Western man's whiteness, imagination, enlightened science, and movements toward peace have developed from a culture and history mobilized against women of color.The political advancements of white men have grown directly from the devastation and holocaust of people of color and our lands. This technological and material progress has been in direct proportion to the undevelopment of women of color. Yet the dayto- day survival, political struggles, and rising up of women of color, especially black women in the United States, reveal both complex resistance to holocaust and undevelopment and often conflicted responses to the military and war. The Holocausts Women of color are survivors of and remain casualties of holocausts, and we are direct victims of war**-**that is, of open armed conflict between countries or between factions within the same country. But women of color were not soldiers**,** nor did we trade animal pelts or slaves to the white man for guns**,** nor did we sell or lease our lands to the white man for wealth. Most men and women of color resisted and fought back, were slaughtered, enslaved, and force marched into plantation labor camps to serve the white masters of war and to build their empires and war machines. People of color were and are victims of holocausts-that is, of great and widespread destruction, usually by fire. The world as we knew and created it was destroyed in a continual scorched earth policy of the white man. The experience of Jews and other Europeans under the Nazis can teach us the value of understanding the totality of destructive intent, the extensiveness of torture, and the demonical apparatus of war aimed at the human spirit. A Jewish father pushed his daughter from the lines of certain death at Auschwitz and said, "You will be a remembrance-You tell the story. You survive." She lived. He died. Many have criticized the Jews for forcing non-Jews to remember the 6 million Jews who died under the Nazis and for etching the names Auschwitz and Buchenwald, Terezin and Warsaw in our minds. Yet as women of color, we, too, are "remembrances" of all the holocausts against the people of the world. We must remember the names of concentration camps such as Jesus, Justice, Brotherhood, and Integrity,ships that carried millions of African men, women, and children chained and brutalized across the ocean to the "New World." We must remember the Arawaks, the Taino, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Narragansett, the Montauk, the Delaware, and the other Native American names of thousands of U.S. towns that stand for tribes of people who are no more. We must remember the holocausts visited against the Hawaiians, the aboriginal peoples of Australia, the Pacific Island peoples, and the women and children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We must remember the slaughter of men and women at Sharpeville, the children of Soweto, and the men of Attica**.** We must never, ever, forget the children disfigured, the men maimed, and the women broken in our holocausts-we must remember the names, the numbers, the faces, and the stories and teach them to our children and our children's children so the world can never forget our suffering and our courage. Whereas the particularity of the Jewish holocaust under the Nazis is over, our holocausts continue. We are the madres locos (crazy mothers) in the Argentinian square silently demanding news of our missing kin from the fascists who rule. We are the children of El Salvador who see our mothers and fathers shot in front of our eyes. We are the Palestinian and Lebanese women and children overrun by Israeli, Lebanese, and U.S. soldiers. We are the women and children of the bantustans and refugee camps and the prisoners of Robbin Island. We are the starving in the Sahel, the poor in Brazil, the sterilized in Puerto Rico. We are the brothers and sisters of Grenada who carry the seeds of the New Jewel Movement in our hearts, not daring to speak of it with our lipsyet. Our holocaust is South Africa ruled by men who loved Adolf Hitler, who have developed the Nazi techniques of terror to more sophisticated levels. Passes replace the Nazi badges and stars. Skin color is the ultimate badge of persecution. Forced removals of women, children, and the elderly-the "useless appendages of South Africa"-into barren, arid bantustans without resources for survival have replaced the need for concentration camps. Black sex-segregated barracks and cells attached to work sites achieve two objectives: The work camps destroy black family and community life, a presumed source of resistance, and attempt to create human automatons whose purpose is to serve the South African state's drive toward wealth and hegemony. Like other fascist regimes, South Africa disallows any democratic rights to black people; they are denied the right to vote, to dissent, to peaceful assembly, to free speech, and to political representation. The regime has all the typical Nazi-like political apparatus: house arrests of dissenters such as Winnie Mandela; prison murder of protestors such as Stephen Biko; penal colonies such as Robbin Island. Black people, especially children, are routinely arrested without cause, detained without limits, and confronted with the economic and social disparities of a nation built around racial separation. Legally and economically, South African apartheid is structural and institutionalized racial war. The Organization of African Unity's regional intergovernmental meeting in 1984 in Tanzania was called to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women. The meeting considered South Africa's racist apartheid regime a peace issue. The "regime is an affront to the dignity of all Africans on the continent and a stark reminder of the absence of equality and peace, representing the worst form of institutionalized oppression and strife." Pacifists such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi who have used nonviolent resistance charged that those who used violence to obtain justice were just as evil as their oppressors. Yet all successful revolutionary movements have used organized violence. This is especially true of national liberation movements that have obtained state power and reorganized the institutions of their nations for the benefit of the people. If men and women in South Africa do not use organized violence, they could remain in the permanent violent state of the slave. Could it be that pacifism and nonviolence cannot become a way of life for the oppressed? Are they only tactics with specific and limited use for protecting people from further violence? For most people in the developing communities and the developing world consistent nonviolence is a luxury; it presumes that those who have and use nonviolent weapons will refrain from using them long enough for nonviolent resisters to win political battles. To survive, peoples in developing countries must use a varied repertoire of issues, tactics, and approaches. Sometimes arms are needed to defeat apartheid and defend freedom in South Africa; sometimes nonviolent demonstrations for justice are the appropriate strategy for protesting the shooting of black teenagers by a white man, such as happened in New York City. Peace is not merely an absence of 'conflict that enables white middleclass comfort**,** nor is it simply resistance to nuclear war and war machinery**.** The litany of "you will be blown up, too"directed by a white man to a black woman obscures the permanency and institutionalization of war, the violence and holocaust that people of color face daily. Unfortunately, the holocaust does not only refer to the mass murder of Jews, Christians, and atheists during the Nazi regime; it also refers to the permanent institutionalization of war that is part of every fascist and racist regime. The holocaust lives. It is a threat to world peace as pervasive and thorough as nuclear war.

## Hip Hop

#### The 1AC is emblematic of the generalization of hip hop as an art form – they uncritically group experiences under the same header without careful analysis of the specificity of anti-Blackness – this recreates the liberal multicultural dream of a cross-racial community sewn from the common fabric of humanity – this actively deemphasizes and dehistoricizes the particularity of blackness and deradicalizes blackness

Saucier & Woods 14**[[33]](#footnote-27)**

We arrive at two points relevant to our consideration of the contemporary culture of politics that fancies hip hop studies. First, the containment of black politics is the precondition for the institutional life of multiculturalism. Second, hip hop studies is a product of the liberal multiculturalist university—not of the black struggle that produced both the radical conception of black studies and hip hop itself. Hip hop studies is a feature of liberal universalism in which scholarsand teachers prefer “difference,” “ethnicity,” and “multiethnicity” over the “radical alterity” of black studies (Wynter 2002: 159). Hip hop studies should be viewed as nothing more than a prosthetic of multiculturalism, and in this sense its purpose in the academy is to further sabotage the radical history of black studies from within. For example, at the University of Arizona, where a minor in hip hop studies has recently been approved, hip hop is understood as a way in which to better understand “the fabric of humanity**.**”4 Hip hop in this instance is seen as forging a sense of cross-racial imagined community. By extension, this tendency is also exhibited in the scholarship by hip hop scholars who employ a multiculturalist paradigm (Kahf 2007; Wang 2007). These scholars often deemphasize and dehistoricize the centrality of blackness and its relationship to hip hop culture; it no longer is a black art form, but a cross-racial and multiethnic art form that belongs to everyone. Put slightly differently, multicultural understandings of hip hop often fail to deal with the legacy of black people as property and what this means might mean for who can claim ownership of hip hop. While radical blackness has always pursued solidarity and common cause with other racial and cultural groups throughout history, it has always done so through a pronounced critique of coalition politics that, time and again, subordinate the needs of the black community to the needs of—take your pick—labor, integrationism, the union, women, “people of color,” “quality of life,” “safe and secure” streets, and so forth (Ture and Hamilton 1992). The subsumption of hip hop studies within black studies undermines the stability of the field and its coherent development in a manner that echoes the Ford Foundation’s earlier implosion of black studies. Hip hop studies recaptures black studies from within—that is, it undermines the radicality of the black studies structural assault on antiblackness by highlighting the diverse performances of resistance (read: universalism) at the expense of a sustained ethical confrontation with black suffering and black refusal-of-victimization (Vargas and James 2012).

#### The 1AC implicitly assumes a causal link between performativity and emancipation, that hip hop can somehow have a disruptive effect that contributes to resistance – this is a grave error in analysis that confuses performativity with structure – anti-Blackness must be seen as an ontological structure, not a performative question – only this enables an unflinching paradigmatic analysis

Saucier & Woods 14**[[34]](#footnote-28)**

Black expressive culture, black people, blackness has been central to Western civilization since at least the time of the Mediterranean slave trade in the 14th century**.** This central role of blackness, its entanglement in white desire and disgust, has been the focus of critical work within black studies on the “fungible” quality of the captive black body. By “fungible,” black studies is calling attention tothe premium in Western cultureonrendering blackness useful to any and all manner of purposes that whites (and we would add, nonblacks) can dream up—beyond and beside whatever degree of surplus value is extracted from black labor. For instance, black studies scholars have shown that the crimes of slavery—from the terror of whippings, mutilations, incinerations, and dismemberment, to the daily hand-to-hand combat of rape, to the mockery of the coffle, auction block, and traders’ pen—were staged spectacles for white audiences as much as they were techniques for managing the enslaved (cf. Hartman 1997; Johnson 1999). This history of fungible blackness warrants due diligence from those who deploy black culture. There are numerous ways in which hip hop studies fails in this respect, and while a proper accounting remains to be done, it is our feeling that rather than promoting solidarity with blackness, the embrace of hip hop effaces the violence of black existence, discredits claims to black pain and suffering, and circumscribes black sentience. The litany of state- sanctioned and legally produced forces of “premature death” in which black people must live, such as the destruction of contemporary black family life due to the militarization of black neighborhoods by the conjoined child welfare, school, and criminal justice systems (Gilmore 2007: 28; Roberts 1998)—all register in hip hop studies in contradictory ways amounting to little more than a “circumscribed recognition of black humanity” which is itself “an exercise of violence” (Hartman 1997: 34–35).¶ One way in which this problem plays out in hip hop studies is using hip hop to retrench grievous errors in analysis as to what racism is and how social change occurs. We can observe this error with respect to the tension between performance and structure. With respect to racism, one way of thinking about the difference between performance and structure is in terms of acts ofinterpersonal discrimination versus institutionalized forms of discrimination that do not require an individual agent to act with racist malice to nonetheless achieve racist outcomes. There is a strong preference in U.S. society to hold fast to the myth that racism is, in the final analysis, a problem of thinking bad thoughts and behaving badly— performing racism (Bonilla-Silva 2009). In fact, racism is a structure— historical, epistemological, ontological, axiological, social—in which our preconscious interests, unconscious desires, and conscious identifications are constituted in racial violence. Educators often find that students express an affinity for this notion of the performative, that it conforms totheir expectations of racism, as well as with their perceptions of what is going on in hip hop: the performance of black resistance to racism, on the one hand; or, the performance of pathological blackness, on the other hand.¶ Unfortunately, performativity does not begin to approach the magnitude of what is at stake. Seizing the black body through direct relations of force formed the modern world. That is to say, racial difference—and specifically, racial blackness—is the effect of violence, not its cause. This means that the violence to which black people are subjected is gratuitous— wholly apart from any actions they may or may not have committed—and registers their position outside the structures of human filiation, hegemonic consent, and the social contract through which civil society is composed (cf. Marriott 2007; Mills 1999; Wilderson 2003). In the black studies archive, the structure of gratuitous violence is translated as delimiting the liberatory potential of black performance. In other words, if violence is not simply event (performance) but also a “grammar of emergence and being” (the structural coordinates of the social) then it is a disabling error in praxis to confuse the “scales of coercion” (Wilderson 2009: 119)—the violent production and reproduction of racial blacknes**s—**with the “scales of consent” (Sexton 2008: 9)—the institutionalization of relations of force within relations of power.Hip hop studies implicitly desires a causal link between performance (by the MC, the dancer, the student learning how to read/write/think through rap, etc.) and emancipation—or, in its liberal universalist variant, a nebulous (from the vantage point of blackness) “social justice.”¶ Hip hop itself is not immune from this desire**,** nor are those who enter the academy through hip hop—which is the implicit goal of much of hip hop studies at the community and secondary school levels (i.e., that youth will better themselves and the world through their education). We have had the opportunity to participate in a number of hip hop conferences and events where the efficacy of performativity was grossly overstated in the absence of an analysis of racial regime and the antiblack violence which are both the conditions of possibility for the very idea and material reality of the U.S. itself, and moreover, are also the scene of black expressive arts**.** In each of these moments of yearning for the liberatory possibilities of performance, the corpus of black studies is overlooked and hip hop is treated as disconnected from the history of how white society has regarded the topics of black life as endlessly fungible.

## Narrative

#### The 1AC turns black suffering into a spectacle, something to be easily packaged up and consumed by white judges as part of the libidinal economy of slavery where the masters derive enjoyment from portrayals of suffering. this is performing before the master, which fixes and naturalizes the conditions of pained embodiment.

Hartman 97**[[35]](#footnote-29)**

As well, we need ask why the site of suffering so readily lends itself to inviting identification. Why is pain the conduit of identification? This question may seem to beg the obvious, given the violent domination and dishonor constitutive of enslavement, the acclaimed transformative capacities of pain in sentimental culture, the prevalence of public displays of suffering inclusive of the pageantry of the trade, the spectacle of punishment, circulating reports of slavery’s horrors, the runaway success of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and the passage through the “bloodstained gate,” which was a convention of the slave narrative, all of which contributed to the idea that the feelings and consciousness of the enslaved were most available at this site. However, what I am trying to suggest is that if the scene of beating readily lends itself to an identification with the enslaved, it does so at the risk of fixing and naturalizing this condition of pained embodiment and, in complete defiance of Rankin’s good intention, increases the difficulty of beholding black suffering since the endeavor to bring pain close exploits the spectacle of the body in pain and oddly confirms the spectral character of suffering and the inability to witnessthe captive’s pain. If, on one hand, pain extends humanity to the dispossessed and the ability to sustain suffering leads to transcendence, on the other, the spectral and spectacular character of this suffering, or, in other words, the shocking and ghostly presence of pain, effaces and restricts black sentience. As Rankin himself states, in order for this suffering to induce a reaction and stir feelings, it must be brought close. Yet if sentiment or morality are “inextricably tied to human proximity,” to quote Zygmunt Bauman, the problem is that in the very effort to “bring it near” and “inspect it closely” it is dissipated. According to Bauman, “morality conforms to the law of optical perspective. It looms large and thick close to the eye.” So, then, how does suffering elude or escape us in the very effort to bring it near? It does so precisely because it can only be brought near by way of a proxy and by way of Rankin’s indignation and imagination. If the black body is the vehicle of the other’s power, pleasure, and profit, then it is no less true that it is the white or near-white body that makes the captive’s suffering visible and discernible. Indeed, the elusiveness of black suffering can be attributed to a racist optics in which black flesh is itself identified as the source of opacity, the denial of black humanity, and the effacement of sentience integral to the wanton use of the captive body. And as noted earlier, this is further complicated by the repressive underside of an optics of morality that insists upon the other as a mirror of the self and that in order to recognize suffering one must substitute the self for the other. While Rankin attempts to ameliorate the insufficiency of feeling before the spectacle of the other’s suffering, this insufficiency is, in fact, displaced rather than remedied by his standing in. Likewise, this attempt exacerbates the distance between the readers and those suffering by literally removing the slave from view as pain is brought close. Moreover, we need to consider whether the identification forged at the site of suffering confirms black humanity at the peril of reinforcing racist assumptions of limited sentience, in that the humanity of the enslaved and the violence of the institution can only be brought into view by extreme examplesof incineration and dismemberment or by placing white bodies at risk. What does it mean that the violence of slavery or pained existence of the enslaved, if discernible, is only so in the most heinous and grotesque examples and not in the quotidian routines of slavery? As well, is not the difficulty of empathy related to both the devaluation and the valuation of black life? Empathic identification is complicated further by the fact that it cannot be extricated from the economy of chattel slavery with which it is at odds, for this projection of one’s feeling upon or into the object of property and the phantasmic slipping into captivity, while it is distinct from the pleasures of self-augmentation yielded by the ownership of the captive body and the expectations fostered therein, is nonetheless entangled with this economy and identification facilitated by a kindred possession or occupation of the captive body, albeit on a different register.In other words, what I am trying to isolate are the kinds of expectations and the qualities of affect distinctive to the economy of slavery. The relation between pleasure and the possession of slave property, in both the figurative and literal senses, can be explained in part by the fungibility of the slave-that is, the augmentation of the master subject through his embodiment in external objects and persons. Put differently, the fungibility of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others’ feelings, ideas, desires, and values; and, as property, the dispossessed body of the enslaved is the surrogate for the master’s body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion. Thus, while the beaten and mutilated body presumably establishes the brute materiality of existence, the materiality of suffering regularly eludes (re)cognition by virtue of the body’s being replaced by other signs of value, as well as other bodies. Thus the desire to don, occupy, or possess blackness or the black body as a sentimental resource and/or locus of excess enjoyment is both founded upon and enabled by the material relations of chattel slavery. In light of this, is it too extreme or too obvious to suggest that Rankin’s flight of imagination and the excitements engendered by suffering might also be pleasurable? Certainly this willing abasement confirms Rankin’s moral authority, but what about the pleasure engendered by this embrace of pain-that is the tumultuous passions of the flightly imagination stirred by this fantasy of being beaten? Rankin’s imagined beating is immune neither to the pleasures to be derived from the masochistic fantasy nor to the sadistic pleasure to be derived from the spectacle of sufferance. Here my intention is not to shock or exploit the perverse but to consider critically the complicated nexus of terror and enjoyment by examining the obviated and debased diversions of the capricious master; the pleasure of indignation yielded before the spectacle of sufferance; the instability of the scene of suffering; and the confusion of song and sorrow typical of the coffle, the auction block, performing before the master, and other popular amusements.

## Empathetic Identification

#### The 1AC’s method of empathetic identification makes the oppressor take the position of the oppressed which commodifies blackness.

**Mann 13[[36]](#footnote-30)**

Much of this also coincides with an earlier conversation between James and Aunt Abby in which the former recalls overhearing Frado sobbing in despair in the family barn. James proceeds to ventriloquize Frado’s bitter, suicidal rant before, in an abrupt shift, he informs his aunt that “I took the opportunity to combat the notions she seemed to entertain respecting the loneliness of her condition and want of sympathizing friends” (40; emphasis added). During the course of the remembered conversation, James positions the cruelty of his mother as the exception rather than the rule at the North, and declares that Frado surely “might hope for better things in the future” (ibid). In Scenes of Subjection, Saidiya Hartman usefully critiques such processes of **empathetic identification**, the **slippery politics of which reinscribes an unequal set of power relations along racial lines**. According to Hartman, **empathy installs a dynamic predicated upon a “phantasmic vehicle of identification,” a substitution contingent upon the disappearing, or invisibility of the racialized object**. Put another way, **interracial empathy “requires that the white body be positioned in the place of the black body in order to make this suffering visible and intelligible”** (19). Within the space of Wilson’s novel, **Frado’s** **striking claim that “No one cares for me** [,] **only to get my work”** only **accrues meaning via its displacement by** James’ subsequent **mediation and opportunistic shoring up of white liberal subjectivity and abolitionism**. When **James** later **discloses that “Having spoken these words of comfort**, I rose with the resolution that **if I recovered** my health I would take her home with me,” **one** indeed **wonders, comfort for whom**? In fact, **Frado remains voiceless for the entire interlude. Her understanding of** (black) **death as a site of resistive possibility**—“Why can’t I die? Oh, what have I to live for?” she cries—**is reduced to juvenile ignorance. Making visible the “ambivalent,” “repressive” qualities as well as the “facile intimacy” enabled by the empathy of which** Hartman theorizes, **James’ relationship** with Frado **demonstrates precisely how** black **captive bodies** (enslaved or free) **persistently serve as fungible commodities for white economies, material and ideological** (Hartman 19).

## Empirics

#### Their descriptions of statistics mystifies the true violence of anti blackness

Wilderson 10**[[37]](#footnote-31)**

I have little interest in assailing political conservatives. Nor is my ar- gument wedded to the disciplinary needs of political science, or even sociology, where injury must be established, first, as White supremacist event, from which one then embarks on a demonstration of intent, or racism; and, if one is lucky, or foolish, enough, a solution is proposed. If the position of the Black is, as I argue, a paradigmatic impossibility in the Western Hemisphere, indeed, in the world, in other words, if a Black is the very antithesis of a Human subject, as imagined by Marxism and psy- choanalysis, then his or her paradigmatic exile is not simply a function of repressive practices on the part of institutions (as political science and sociology would have it). This banishment from the Human fold is to be found most profoundly in the emancipatory meditations of Black people's staunchest "allies," and in some of the most "radical" films. Here—not in restrictive policy, unjust legislation, police brutality, or conservative scholarship—is where the Settler/Master's sinews are most resilient. The polemic animating this research stems from (1) my reading of Native and Black American meta-commentaries on Indian and Black subject positions written over the past twenty-three years and ( 2 ) a sense of how much that work appears out of joint with intellectual protocols and political ethics which underwrite political praxis and socially engaged popular cinema in this epoch of multiculturalism and globalization. The sense of abandonment I experience when I read the meta-commentaries on Red positionality (by theorists such as Leslie Silko, Ward Churchill, Taiaiake Alfred, Vine Deloria Jr., and Haunani-Kay Trask) and the meta-commentaries on Black positionality (by theorists such as David Marriott, Saidiya Hartman, Ronald Judy, Hortense Spillers, Orlando Patterson, and Achille Mbembe) against the deluge of multicultural positivity is overwhelming. One suddenly realizes that, though the semantic field on which subjec- tivity is imagined has expanded phenomenally through the protocols of multiculturalism and globalization theory, Blackness and an unflinching articulation of Redness are more unimaginable and illegible within this expanded semantic field than they were during the height of the F B I ' S repressive Counterintelligence Program ( C O I N T E L P R O ) . On the seman- tic field on which the new protocols are possible, Indigenism can indeed lO become partially legible through a programmatics of structural adjust- ment (as fits our globalized era). In other words, for the Indians' subject position to be legible, their positive registers of lost or threatened cultural identity must be foregrounded, when in point of fact the antagonistic register of dispossession that Indians "possess" is a position in relation to a socius structured by genocide. As Churchill points out, everyone from Armenians to Jews have been subjected to genocide, but the Indigenous position is one for which genocide is a constitutive element, not merely an historical event, without which Indians would not, paradoxically, "exist." 9 Regarding the Black position, some might ask why, after claims suc- cessfully made on the state by the Civil Rights Movement, do I insist on positing an operational analytic for cinema, film studies, and political theory that appears to be a dichotomous and essentialist pairing of Masters and Slaves? In other words, why should we think of today's Blacks in the United States as Slaves and everyone else (with the exception of Indians) as Masters? One could answer these questions by demonstrating how nothing remotely approaching claims successfully made on the state has come to pass. In other words, the election of a Black president aside, police brutality, mass incarceration, segregated and substandard schools and housing, astronomical rates of H I V infection, and the threat of being turned away en masse at the polls still constitute the lived expe- rience of Black life. But such empirically based rejoinders would lead us in the wrong direction; we would find ourselves on "solid" ground, which would only mystify, rather than clarify, the question. We would be forced to appeal to "facts," the "historical record," and empirical markers of stasis and change, all of which could be turned on their head with more of the same. Underlying such a downward spiral into sociology, political sci- ence, history, and public policy debates would be the very rubric that I am calling into question: the grammar of suffering known as exploitation and alienation, the assumptive logic whereby subjective dispossession is arrived at in the calculations between those who sell labor power and those who acquire it. The Black qua the worker. Orlando Patterson has already dispelled this faulty ontological grammar in Slavery and Social Death, where he demonstrates how and why work, or forced labor, is not a constituent element of slavery. Once the "solid" plank of "work" is removed from slavery, then the conceptually coherent notion of "claims against the state"—the proposition that the state and civil society are elastic enough to even contemplate the possibility of an emancipatory project for the Black position—disintegrates into thin air. The imaginary of the state and civil society is parasitic on the Middle Passage. Put an- other way, No slave, no world. And, in addition, as Patterson argues, no slave is in the world. If, as an ontological position, that is, as a grammar of suffering, the Slave is not a laborer but an anti-Human, a position against which Hu- manity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal in- tegrity; if the Slave is, to borrow from Patterson, generally dishonored, perpetually open to gratuitous violence, and void of kinship structure, that is, having no relations that need be recognized, a being outside of re- lationality, then our analysis cannot be approached through the rubric of gains or reversals in struggles with the state and civil society, not unless and until the interlocutor first explains how the Slave is of the world. The onus is not on one who posits the Master/Slave dichotomy but on the one who argues there is a distinction between Slaveness and Blackness. How, when, and where did such a split occur? The woman at the gates of Columbia Univer

## Puar

#### Puar’s analysis fails to contest the underlying structures which perpetuate death and control, and the proposed methods of resistance do not allow for full nihilism or political apostasy. This turns the aff and prevents any solvency.

Wilderson and Douglas 13**[[38]](#footnote-32)**

Jasbir Puar frames Terrorist Assemblages by taking further the underwriting assumptive logics of critical theory and cultural criticisms, the fields the text both draws on and contributes to. The text foregroundstheories of subject resistance in relation to violence by atomizing the logic of analysis down to the level of genre distinctions. This framework posits a critical interrogation of how subject categories are incorporated by the state. The terrorist assemblage is a theoretic that resists subsumption into the war machine of the homonationalist nation-state formation, by contesting, refusing, morphing, and acting against classifications in a manner that suggests an incomprehensibility rather than legibility. This increases the possibility to apprehend the ontological and affective possibilities that resonate in queer futurity. By situating two genres of subjectivity, race and sexuality, in tension with one another, Terrorist Assemblages maneuvers to mark an investment in upholding the underlying structures upon which these terms are constituted. Puar argues, It is precisely within the interstices of life and death that we find the differences between queer subjects who are being folded (back) into life and the racialized queerness that emerges through the naming of populations, thus fueling the oscillation between the disciplining of subjects and the control of populations. . . . We can complicate, for instance, the centrality of biopolitical reproductive biologism by expanding the terrain of who reproduces and what is reproduced . . . rather than being predominately understood as implicitly or explicitly targeted for death. While this argument unhinges many protocols for thinking subjectivity in the humanities, it does not contest the grounds upon which genres, as subcategories of the subject, are produced and enacted. That is to say, the gesture to think outside of the constrictorsand binds of race and sexuality as distinctive orientations by assessing the mergers, overlaps, and divergences of their competing and coalescing concerns, does not interrogate the parameters that suture race and sexuality as categories, and life and death as legible modes of existing and suffering within those categories. Instead it demands a more suitable relationship to genre and while the forms of relationality may at times be unnamable for Puar, **t**his assessment still maintains that existing in the world is in fact a possibility. Also what is apparent in the formation of the terrorist assemblage as an inhabitance of resistanceis the assumption of the state as the predominating force of violence and it furthermore asserts that all violence has the potential to bedefinitively recognized as such, violence. Metaphysics, in this context, is wholly unattended to, yet present in its absent consideration. Violence is assumed as the constitution of a singular, refracted, and namable predominating force, the state and its extension, and is blind to considerations of violence located at the constitution of being itself and present prior to the arrival of the state.

## Disease

#### The fight against disease in marginalized communities is anti-blackness – reproduces colonialism and the white savior complex while relegating black communities to “diseased pathogens”

**Hudson and Pierre 14[[39]](#footnote-33)**

The ravages of **Ebola** in West Africa **and** of **cholera** in Haiti – **and the world’s response** to both – **remind us** that the scourge of anti-Blackness is savage, deadly, and global. The response to the two epidemics suggests **that Black(s)** people **are expendable, unprotected from the most** abject and **degrading** forms of **suffering, immaterial – waste**. And they raise the question: how do we begin to build a movement claiming Black lives matter when, clearly, they do not? The **U**nited **N**ations **brought cholera to Haiti** in the fall of 2010. The cholera bacteria was present in the fecal matter of Nepalese soldiers who were stationed in the country as part of MINUSTAH, the United Nations force that has militarily occupied the republic since 2004. When the soldier’s shit was pumped from the MINUSTAH camp into the rivers of the Artibonite Valley in central Haiti, the bacteria quickly spread unchecked. To date, **cholera has killed** close to **9,000** people, **and sickened more than 700,000**. For Haitians, **cholera**’s degrading symptoms – uncontrollable vomiting and diarrhea – **reinforce the humiliation and indignity suffered at the hands of foreigners.** So too does the international response to the epidemic. Despite reams of scientific evidence proving the source of the bacteria, the **UN** has **refused** to accept **responsibility** for the epidemic and its consequences. Their initial actions of literally shitting on Haiti and Haitians by callously dumping toxic matter into water that served as a source for drinking, bathing, and irrigation for thousands of Haitians, was shrugged off. **They** have also **responded** to Haitian **requests for aid** or compensation **with** a cruel **impunity**. When Haitians and their international allies tried to sue the UN for its actions in an attempt to get redress, **UN Secretary general**, Ban-Ki Moon **asserted** the organization’s immunity – and Haiti’s lack of sovereignty – bycoldly asserting **that the charges** against it **were**, in legal parlance, **“non-receivable”** – and hence, inactionable. In essence, **the assertion** of non-receivable **becomes a curt denial of Haitian humanity**. Similar circumstances have emerged, in West Africa, were Ebola has stricken primarily Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Like in Haiti, the symptoms associated with Ebola mark it as especially degrading, the disease particularly “dirty.” A virus of no known origin that is spread through contact with bodily fluids, Ebola shares with cholera certain symptoms, such as vomiting and diarrhea. Though while the victims of cholera die from organ failure and acute dehydration, those of Ebola often die from hemorrhaging. But beyond the symptoms, the response to cholera in Haiti and Ebola in West Africa has been strikingly similar – though, perhaps, **in West Africa the indifference to Black suffering**, **and** the **desire to preserve White life**, **has been** startlingly **blatant**. Indeed, **many** in North America **found out about** the **Ebola** outbreak **when news that two white missionaries were** given an experimental drug and **flown** **out of** the **Liberia** to the U.S. (at a cost of $2 million for each evacuation and treatment) for further treatment. A third white U.S. citizen was flown to Nebraska for treatment. But warnings of an epidemic had been circulating since late 2013 and **by the time news of the White flight reached** the shores of the **America**s, **Ebola had** already **infected** more than **1660** **Liberians**, killing scores.As of September 18th, there have been 5,300 infected with Ebola and 2,630 deaths, with most of the cases in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Here, again, we see the pattern where African, — **Black** — **lives are** demeaned and deemed **disposable**. As Africans, including African doctors and aid workers were quickly dying from the disease, three white missionaries were given the experimental drug – itself under much speculation – and flown to safety. By mid-September, when the fourth African doctor, Dr. Olivet Buck, head of the Lumley Health Center in Freetown, Sierra Leone, died of the disease, it was revealed that the World Health Organization refused to send her to Germany for treatment. At the same time, two Dutch doctors stricken with Ebola were flown home to Europe. It has also emerged that the first African doctor to die of the virus, Dr. Sheik Umar Khan, the chief Sierra Leonean physician treating Ebola, was also denied the chance by Doctors Without Borders to receive the experimental drug, ZMAP, given to the two white missionaries. To add insult to injury, the U.S. government first announced that a $22-million, 25-bed Ebola hospital was intended for foreign (read: mainly white) healthcare workers. While outrage forced the U.S. to include African health workers in its plans, it was – and has been – clear that African lives don’t matter. **The western, white, response** to the cholera and Ebola epidemics ultimately **teaches us that global white supremacy thrives on Black suffering**, denigration, and death. Because, **next to the stories of Black disease** as endemic and **linked to uncivilized** and untamed Black cultural **practices** – as well as the way white media revels in publishing pictures of dead Blacks – **we get the construction of** the “brave” and “heroic” **white saviors who risk their lives for the Blacks** and non-whites: the “white savior industrial complex” at its best. Of course, there is **no mention of the** decidedly **non-heroic relationship of the white western world to** countries like **Haiti and** those of **West Africa**. As Teju Cole demonstrates, the **“white savior industrial complex supports brutal policies**…[where] the banality of evil transmutes into the banality of sentimentality”: imperialism, neocolonialism, military occupation. In a recent interview, Dr. Joia Mukherjee, of Partners in Health, explained the racism behind the west’s Ebola response by saying, “I think it’s easy for the world — the powerful world, who are largely non-African, non-people of color — to ignore the suffering of poor, black people.” But we have to see this as more than ignoring the Black suffering poor; it is about white supremacy’s desire for Black death and Black suffering. It is about coming to terms with the fact that there is something systematic – and sinister – about Black killing globally. It is about the reality that in a universal context of anti-Blackness, Black lives don’t matter – anywhere.

# Alts

## Unflinching Paradigmatic Analysis

#### The alternative is an unflinching paradigmatic analysis. The act of an unflinching paradigmatic analysis allows us to deny intellectual legitimacy to the compromises that radical elements have made because of an unwillingness to hold moderates feet to the fire predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis.

Wilderson 10**[[40]](#footnote-34)**

STRANGE ASit might seem, this book project began in South Africa. During the last years of apartheid I worked for revolutionary change in both an underground and above-ground capacity, for the Charterist Movement in general and the ANC in particular. During this period, I began to see how essential an unflinching paradigmatic analysis is to a movement dedicated to the complete overthrow of an existing order. The neoliberal compromises that the radical elements of the Chartist Movement made with the moderate elements were due, in large part, to our unwillingness to hold the moderates' feet to the fire of a political agenda predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis. Instead, we allowed our energies and points of attention to be displaced by and onto pragmatic considerations. **Simply put**, we abdicated the power to pose the question—**and the power to pose the question is** the greatest power of all. Elsewhere, I have written about this unfortunate turn of events *(Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid),*so I'll not rehearse the details here. Suffice it to say, this book germinated in the many political and academic discussions and debates that I was fortunate enough to be a part of at a historic moment and in a place where the word revolution was spoken in earnest, free of qualifiers and irony. For their past and ongoing ideas and interventions, I extend solidarity and appreciation to comrades Amanda Alexander, Franco Barchiesi, Teresa Barnes, Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai, Nigel Gibson, Steven Greenberg, Allan Horowitz, Bushy Kelebonye (deceased), Tefu Kelebonye, Ulrike Kistner, Kamogelo Lekubu, Andile Mngxitama, Prishani Naidoo, John Shai, and S'bu Zulu.

## Burn it Down

#### The only means by which we can rectify the violent order imposed by civil society is through its entire destruction. As every contour of social relations is marked by anti-blackness, every aspect of society must be destroyed, dismantled and reconfigured.

**Farley 05[[41]](#footnote-35)**

What is to be done? Two hundred years ago, **when the slaves in Haiti rose up, they, of necessity, burned everything**: They burned San Domingo flat so that at the end of the war it was a charred desert. Why do you burn everything? asked a French officer of a prisoner. **We have a right to burn what we cultivate because a man has a right to dispose of his own labour**, was the reply of this unknown anarchist.48 The slaves burned everything **because everything was against them**. Everything was against the slaves, the entire order that it was their lot to follow, **the entire order in which they were positioned as worse than senseless things, every plantation, everything**.49 **“Leave nothing white behind you,” said Toussaint** to those dedicated to the end of white-over- black.50 “God gave Noah the rainbow sign. No more water, the fire next time.”51 **The slaves** burned everything, yes, but, **unfortunately**, they **only burned everything in Haiti**.52 **Theirs was the greatest** and most successful **revolution** in the history of the world **but the failure of their fire to cross the waters was the great tragedy** of the nineteenth century.53 At the dawn of the twentieth century, W.E.B. **Du Bois wrote, “The colorline belts the world.”**54 Du Bois said that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the colorline.55 **The problem**, now, **at the dawn of the twenty-first century is the problem of the colorline**. **The colorline continues to belt the world.** Indeed, **the slave power that is the U**nited **S**tates **now threatens an entire world with the death that it has become and so the slaves of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, those with nothing but their chains to lose, must, if they would be free, if they would escape slavery, win the entire world**. Education is the call. We are called to be and then we become something. We become that which we make of ourselves. We follow the call, we pursue a calling. **Freedom is the only calling**—it alone contains all possible directions, all of the choices that may later blossom into the fullness of our lives. We can only be free. **Slavery is death**. How do slaves die? Slaves are not born, they are made. **The slave must be trained to be that which the living cannot be. The only thing that the living are not free to be is dead**. The slave must be trained to follow the call that is not a call. The slave must be trained to pursue the calling that is not a calling. The slave must be trained to objecthood. The slave must become death. Slavery is white-over-black. White-over-black is death. White-over-black, **death, then, is what the slave must become to pursue its calling that is not a calling**.

## End of the World

#### ­The only ethical demand is one that calls for the end of the world itself—the affirmative represents a conflict within the paradigm of America but refuses to challenge the foundational antagonism that produces the violence that undergirds the that same paradigm

Wilderson 10**[[42]](#footnote-36)**

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks.[[43]](#endnote-7) One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible.[[44]](#endnote-8) Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows.

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# A2 Permutations

## Perm Overviews

#### They didn’t articulate any net benefits to each perm in the last speech which means you should assume links are DAs – don’t let them make new net benefits in the 2AR because I don’t have an opportunity to respond to them.

## A2 PDB w/ Policy Aff

#### Afterthought DA – The perm is only seen as an “add on” to the case. Decentralizes focus from black slave to 1AC reps and impacts. Delegitimizes the alternative

#### Flinching DA – Wilderson 10 says we need an unflinching paradigmatic analysis – ie refusing to flinch in the face of civil society – you have already flinched by using the state and orienting yourself towards civil society which means only the negative can achieve an unflinching paradigmatic analysis which is key to overthrowing civil society

## A2 Coalitions Perm

#### They are liberal multiculturalism – trying to join hands with all marginalized groups and walk happily together to the common fabric of humanity – this ignores the specificity of which antiblackness operates and the ontological status of black bodies and allows analysis of antiblackness to be erased.

#### Flinching DA – Wilderson 10 says we need an unflinching paradigmatic analysis – ie refusing to flinch in the face of civil society – you have already flinched by using the state and orienting yourself towards civil society which means only the negative can achieve an unflinching paradigmatic analysis which is key to overthrowing civil society

#### Coalitions replicate antiblack violence – partnering with junior partners extend the reach of civil society’s violence instead of destroying it. We can’t demand recognition or rights from within the system, but must destroy the system itself – Wilderson 03

#### [If not Junior Partners Shell] Coalitional politics replicates anti-blackness – junior partners extend civil society rather than destroy it.

Wilderson **03[[45]](#footnote-37)**

**THERE IS SOMETHING ORGANIC TO BLACK POSITIONALITY THAT MAKES IT ESSENTIAL to the destruction of civil society.** There is nothing willful or speculative in this statement, for one could just as well state the claim the other way around: There is something organic to civil society that makes it essential to the destruction of the Black body. **Blackness is a positionality of “absolute dereliction”** (Fanon), **abandonment, in the face of civil society**, **and therefore cannot establish itself**, or be established, **through hegemonic interventions**. **Blackness cannot become one of civil society’s** many **junior partners**: **Black citizenship**, **or Black civic obligation**, **are oxymorons**. In light of this, **coalitions and social movements,** even radical social movements like the Prison Abolition Movement, **bound up in the solicitation of hegemon**y, so as **to fortify and extend the interlocutory life of civil society**, **ultimately accommodate only the satiable demands and finite antagonisms of civil society’s junior partners** (**i.e., immigrants, white women, and the working class), but foreclose upon** the **insatiable demands and endless antagonisms of the prison slave and the prison-slave-in-waiting. In short,** whereas such **coalitions and social movements cannot be called the outright handmaidens of white supremacy**, **their rhetorical structures and political desire are underwritten by a supplemental antiBlackness.** In her autobiography, Assata Shakur’s comments vacillate between being interesting and insightful to painfully programmatic and “responsible.” **The expository method of conveyance accounts for this air of responsibility**. **However**, toward the end of the book, she accounts for **coalition work** by way of **extended narrative as opposed to exposition**. We accompany her on one of Zayd Shakur’s many Panther projects with outside groups, work “dealing with white support groups who were involved in raising bail for the Panther 21 members in jail” (Shakur, 1987: 224). With no more than three words, her recollection becomes matter of fact and unfiltered. She writes, “I hated it.” At the time, i felt that anything below 110th street was another country. All my activities were centered in Harlem and i almost never left it. Doing defense committee work was definitely not up my alley.... i hated standing around while all these white people asked me to explain myself, my existence. i became a master of the one-liner (Shakur, 1987: 224). Her hatred of this work is bound up in her anticipation, fully realized, of all the zonal violations to come when a white woman asks her if Zayd is her “panther...you know, is he your black cat?” and then runs her fingers through Assata’s hair to cop a kinky feel. **Her narrative anticipates these violations-to-come at the level of the street, as well as at the level of the body. Here is the moment in her life as a prison-slave-in-waiting**, which is to say, a moment as an ordinary Black person, when she finds herself among “friends” — abolitionists, at least partners in purpose, and yet she feels it necessary to adopt the same muscular constriction, the same coiled anticipation, the same combative “one-liners” that she will need to adopt just one year later to steel herself against the encroachment of prison guards. The verisimilitude between Assata’s wellknown police encounters, and her experiences in civil society’s most nurturing nook, the radical coalition, raises disturbing questions about political desire, Black positionality, and hegemony as a modality of struggle.

## A2 Perm Double Bind

#### This is how civil society operates – ‘Just hold on for a couple more minutes and then some time in the to-come future after this policy is passed we will do this good thing that you want’ – This future to come will never happen and this narrative of progress extends the reach of civil society’s antiblackness. That’s Farley 05.

#### Flinching DA – Wilderson 10 says we need an unflinching paradigmatic analysis – ie refusing to flinch in the face of civil society – this perm is flinching - orienting yourself towards civil society and allowing it to happen one more time, which means only the negative can achieve an unflinching paradigmatic analysis which is key to overthrowing civil society

## A2 Perm Do Aff in Mindset of Neg

# Frontlines

## A2 Policy Making

#### Political Structuring DA – Their state good arguments assume that the black body has access to politics. They fail to respond to our specific interpretations of white supremacy. Our Wilderson evidence indicates that political discourse can never account for structural blackness because it cannot articulate claims of the non human

#### Respectability Politics DA – You force debaters to speak through the lens of white supremacy which reproduces anti blackness. It crushes dissent and forces black bodies to act the way that White supremacy wants them to. This is anti-black and prevents any possibility of “change”

#### This prevents us from ever stepping back and analyzing the violence that the state produces – we can never stop to question the state when we are forced to defend it.

#### They need to win reformism to win policy making good – if we win social death, then politics can never be a viable tool

## A2 Bryant

1. Byrant just says we need concrete solutions – never says policies. We are a concrete solution
2. The State becomes inevitable when we can’t question it – the only way we can create change and rupture the system is by demanding the impossible. Pragmatic considerations sacrifice the power to pose the question – only a refusal to compromise can effectively confront the structural horror of America and civil society
3. This presupposes that the only ‘effective’ solutions are policy options. You have a limited political imagination – saying that we can only focus on policies to create is a tool of the state to justify its violence.
4. TURN – we will never be policy makers – the world of the aff doesn’t actually exist – only the neg is tangle individual action
5. Even if policy options are good, we need to imagine and discuss nonpolicy options. We are not policy makers – we are simply pedagues in an intellectual discussion. Whether practical or not practical, we need to discuss ways to solve problems.

## A2 Curry

1. No impact to abstraction
2. Curry doesn’t say we need policies
3. Its even more abstract to assume the USFG will act ethically

## A2 Zanotti

#### We meet – we are analysis of the state so we learn its tactics, no reason pretending we are policy makers is key

## A2 Cede the Political (Boggs)

#### The political had already been ceded – we critique the idea that there is some way that politics could get better or could get worse, it has stayed the same and will always remain antiblack

1. Boggs flows neg – says the solution is grassroots, not political solutions

## A2 Backlash

#### Dude seriously – there was backlash after abolishing slavery, probably not a reason to not abolish slavery fam

## A2 Psychoanalysis Bad

## A2 Black Women DA

#### Intersectionality DA – Coalitional Politics fail, recreate antiblackness – Wilderson 03

#### They describe women as someone that becomes dehumanized and objectified—this fluidity of switching in an out of the category of the human is something the black lacks and the analogization of women as being outside the category of human actively obscures the original violence of slavery. The category of woman is a colonial category.

Broeck 08[[46]](#footnote-38)

The point I want to make is not that African societies did not organize themselves around different cultural social and economic interpellations for men and women, neither that in new world slavery, and colonial societies female beings were not subjected to particular politics and practices most importantly - rape, and the theft of motherhood. However, as Spillers has argued, and as Hartman's texts illuminate, enslaved African-origin female beings never qualified as women (because of their non-humanness, it followed logically) in the Euro-American modern world and therefore were not interpellated to partake in the ongoing social construction and contestation of gender. The point I do want to make is that gender - a category that would have enabled a black female claim on social negotiations did not apply to 'things', to what was constructed as and treated as human flesh. Moreover, that very category gender emerged in western transatlantic rhetoric precisely in the context of creating a space for white women, who refused to be treated like slaves, like things. Modern gender, with early modern feminism, constituted itself discursively precisely in the shift from 18th century female abolitionist Christian empathy with the enslaved to the paradigmatic separation of women from slaves, a process that repeated itself in the late 19th century American negotiations of, and between, abolitionism and suffrage. The fact that black women have - in their long history in the western transatlantic world - consistently fought for an access to the category gender to be able to occupy a space of articulation at all, most famously, of course, in 19th century Sojourner Truth's angrily subversive exclamation "Am I not a woman and a sister?", does not alter the structural complicity of gender as a category with the formation of the sovereign modern white self. That is to say to have, or to be of female gender which could claim and deserved certain kinds of rights, and treatment, staked the claim of white 18th century women to full human subjectivity, as opposed to thingness. The infamous and very persistent use of the analogy of women and slaves (Broeck) provided a springboard for white women to begin theorizing a catalogue of their own demands for an acknowledgement of modern, free subjectivity as antagonistic to enslavement; as a discursive construct, then, modern gender served the differentiation of human from property. White Feminism and gender theory have thus played active roles in the constitution of modern societies as we know them that need far more reflection in shaping and negotiating the expectations of how to do gender properly, even in its critical modes - roles that were claimed rather rarely in conjunction with, or based on an acknowledgment of black people's agency. To me, the corruption inherent in this history demands a bracketing of the category gender, a coupling of it to that history to lose its innocence. Making this kind of connection will also support Gender Studies to go beyond the epistemologically restrictive gender-race analogy which fired white female abolitionism - an ideological position that is untenable for gender studies in a de-colonial moment. (White) Gender Studies may decide to reflect self-critically on its own embeddedness in the Enlightenment proposal of human freedom which strategically split a certain group of humans, namely enslaved African-origin people, from the constitutive freedom to possess themselves and as such, from any access to subjectivity, which entailed, as Hortense Spillers above all has argued, a splitting of African-origin women from gender. If, thus, the knowledge of the slave trade and slavery will become the site of a re-reading of Enlightenment, modernity and postmodernity, a revised theoretical, and material approach to an epistemology of emancipation like Gender Studies will be possible. Gender Studies, too, lives "in the time of slavery," in the "future created by it" (Hartman 2007, 133). It is the economic, cultural and epistemic regime of human commodification, that transgressive nexus of violence, desire and property which first formed the horizon of the Euro-American modernity that US and European intellectuals, including Gender Studies, have known and claimed. The Enlightenment's proposal of human subjectivity and rights which was in fact inscribed into the world the slave trade and slavery had made (Blackburn), created a vertical structure of access claims to self-representation and social participation from which African-origin people, as hereditary commodities, were a priori abjected. It is on the basis of that abjection, that the category of woman, of gender as a framework to negotiate the social, cultural and economic position of white European women was created. To accept that the very constitution of gender as a term in European early modernity was tied to a social, cultural and political system which constitutively pre-figured "wasted lives," and an extreme precariousness of what constitutes human existence, throws contemporary notions of gendered subjectivity into stark relief. Hartman's work, therefore, may be read as just as axiomatic as Bauman's, Butler's or Agamben's in measuring postmodern global challenges to critical theory. Elaine Scary's, Susan Sontag's interventions on pain and voyeurism, and Spillers' or Wood's considerations, more specifically, on the sexualized campaigns of Anglo-American abolition, have compounded the challenge for an epistemology of slavery as a modern episteme not to recycle abolitionist titillation - the risk to become part of a second order abolitionist discourse must, however, be run. To play an active role in the project of decolonizing (post)modern critical theory, gender studies need to acknowledge and reckon with black de-colonial feminist interventions beyond add-on approaches. Those interventions will enable an epistemic turn away from the solipsistic quasi universal presentism of much of contemporary theory, and make it answerable to its own indebtedness to the history of early modern Europe, and the New World. Hartman's and Spiller's texts, as well as Morrison's writing become something like deconstructive guides: we are being asked to look, and listen with black women's perspectives - but at the same time the texts fold back on themselves, and thus on our reading; they disrupt a smooth appropriation of suffering, they derail us from a swift hate for the Thistlewoods (Mother, 61). Those texts under scrutiny here do enact a kind of self-conscious parasitism, forcing readers into complicity - but they refuse to do it innocently, disrupting a renewed take on slavery by way of abolitionist benevolence. They teach readers that the boundaries of the archive cannot be trespassed at will, and without consequence; and they also teach us to respect what Hartman calls, with Fred Moten, "black noise" (2008, 12). "I, too, live in the time of slavery" - is a statement not yet widely enough echoed; gender theory needs to expose itself to the demands of modern history. At a time of rampant takeover by globalized forces of neo-liberalism, for (white) gender studies theory the challenge is to achieve agony instead of complicity with the corporate projects and, particularly in Europe, with the recent onset of a rampant eulogizing of Europe as the mythical ground of universal freedom. This urgency of the modern past as postmodern present may be shored up against all too flippant deployments of Agamben's, Bauman's or Butler's respective terms of "precarious lives" - terms which need to be reloaded with their entire modern history. (White) critical gender theory, as much as it has been a modern critical agent in the negotiation of patriarchal power, has also partaken in the violence of discursive formations that produced the disposable lives of "black flesh".Black women writers like Hartman, Spillers or Morrison argue for creating or maintaining - in the face of much postmodern indifference or abandon - a particular "relationship to loss". Their work, as formulated most clearly by Hartman, calls for a "redress project" which challenges white reading communities - in the present case, a reading public trained in gender studies, that is - to go beyond the confines of gender. To re-arrive in the time of slavery calls for a political orientation in support of "fugitive justice," in Best and Hartman's words, to interrogate rigorously the kinds of political claims that can be mobilized on behalf of the slave (the stateless, the socially dead, and the disposable) in the political present. [...] [W]e are concerned neither with 'what happened then' nor with 'what is owed because of what happened then,' but rather with the contemporary predicament of freedom, with the melancholy recognition of foreseeable futures still tethered to the past. [...] [W]hat is the story about the slave we ought to tell out of the present we ourselves inhabit -- a present in which torture isn't really torture, a present in which persons have been stripped of rights heretofore deemed inalienable? (Best and Hartman, 3, 4) Hartman (and her co-author, Stephen Best) have outlined a series of questions for the Redress Project, the most important in my context being the following: · What is the violence particular to slavery? [...] What is the essential feature of slavery: (1) property in human beings, (2) physical compulsion and corporal correction of the laborer, (3) involuntary servitude, (4) restrictions on mobility or opportunity or personal liberty, (5) restrictions of liberty of contract, (6) the expropriation of material fruits of the slave's labor, (7) absence of collective self-governance or non-citizenship, (8) dishonor and social death, (9) racism? We understand the particular character of slavery's violence to be ongoing and constitutive of the unfinished project of freedom. · What is the slave -- property, commodity, or disposable life? · What is the time of slavery? Is it the time of the present, as Hortense Spillers suggests, a death sentence reenacted and transmitted across generations? (Best and Hartman, 5) 18 For the still largely white gender studies academic community in Europe to adopt itself to the redress project means a re-location into the time of slavery, into a genealogical continuum which reaches from the early modern period into postmodernity. This kind of "bracketing" gender might result in an expansion of urgently needed sites of cross-racial alliance, for gender studies to find a position from which to share not only postcolonial melancholia but also transcultural conviviality, as Paul Gilroy has recently phrased it. This conviviality requires white critical communities to read black women writers/critics work not as ethnography, but as lessons in decolonization itself. Working through Fred Moten's In The Break, Hartman postulates: By throwing into crisis "what happened when" and by exploiting the "transparency of sources" as fictions of history, I wanted to make visible the production of disposable lives (in the Atlantic slave trade and, as well, in the discipline of history), to describe "the resistance of the object," if only by first imagining it, and to listen for the mutters and oaths and cries of the commodity, trying to narrate "the time of slavery as our present," to "imagine a future in which the afterlife of slavery has ended," and finally, to move beyond "the ongoing state of emergency on which black life remains in peril. (2008, 11, 12) Euro-American modern societies created the paradox of dehumanized but at the same time racialized and hyper-sexualized group of about 12 million people at the locomotive disposal of white ownership. As black writers have insisted for generations, and Hartman's work confirms yet again, this transatlantic moment of early modernity amply qualifies as the first instance of "the lager." Beyond an innocence of 'gender' as a category rooted in a narrative of universal freedom, the political point that Gender Studies needs to adjust itself to is to trace its own story as much to a story of the realization of subjectivity as to a story of abjection, and foundational commodification of black human beings.

## A2 Coalitions

#### Coalitional politics replicates anti-blackness – junior partners extend civil society rather than destroy it.

Wilderson **03[[47]](#footnote-39)**

**THERE IS SOMETHING ORGANIC TO BLACK POSITIONALITY THAT MAKES IT ESSENTIAL to the destruction of civil society.** There is nothing willful or speculative in this statement, for one could just as well state the claim the other way around: There is something organic to civil society that makes it essential to the destruction of the Black body. **Blackness is a positionality of “absolute dereliction”** (Fanon), **abandonment, in the face of civil society**, **and therefore cannot establish itself**, or be established, **through hegemonic interventions**. **Blackness cannot become one of civil society’s** many **junior partners**: **Black citizenship**, **or Black civic obligation**, **are oxymorons**. In light of this, **coalitions and social movements,** even radical social movements like the Prison Abolition Movement, **bound up in the solicitation of hegemon**y, so as **to fortify and extend the interlocutory life of civil society**, **ultimately accommodate only the satiable demands and finite antagonisms of civil society’s junior partners** (**i.e., immigrants, white women, and the working class), but foreclose upon** the **insatiable demands and endless antagonisms of the prison slave and the prison-slave-in-waiting. In short,** whereas such **coalitions and social movements cannot be called the outright handmaidens of white supremacy**, **their rhetorical structures and political desire are underwritten by a supplemental antiBlackness.** In her autobiography, Assata Shakur’s comments vacillate between being interesting and insightful to painfully programmatic and “responsible.” **The expository method of conveyance accounts for this air of responsibility**. **However**, toward the end of the book, she accounts for **coalition work** by way of **extended narrative as opposed to exposition**. We accompany her on one of Zayd Shakur’s many Panther projects with outside groups, work “dealing with white support groups who were involved in raising bail for the Panther 21 members in jail” (Shakur, 1987: 224). With no more than three words, her recollection becomes matter of fact and unfiltered. She writes, “I hated it.” At the time, i felt that anything below 110th street was another country. All my activities were centered in Harlem and i almost never left it. Doing defense committee work was definitely not up my alley.... i hated standing around while all these white people asked me to explain myself, my existence. i became a master of the one-liner (Shakur, 1987: 224). Her hatred of this work is bound up in her anticipation, fully realized, of all the zonal violations to come when a white woman asks her if Zayd is her “panther...you know, is he your black cat?” and then runs her fingers through Assata’s hair to cop a kinky feel. **Her narrative anticipates these violations-to-come at the level of the street, as well as at the level of the body. Here is the moment in her life as a prison-slave-in-waiting**, which is to say, a moment as an ordinary Black person, when she finds herself among “friends” — abolitionists, at least partners in purpose, and yet she feels it necessary to adopt the same muscular constriction, the same coiled anticipation, the same combative “one-liners” that she will need to adopt just one year later to steel herself against the encroachment of prison guards. The verisimilitude between Assata’s wellknown police encounters, and her experiences in civil society’s most nurturing nook, the radical coalition, raises disturbing questions about political desire, Black positionality, and hegemony as a modality of struggle.

## A2 Black/White Binary

#### No warrant for why we preclude multicultural coalitions or non black people of color from analyzing their oppression

#### There is a fundamental difference between the struggles of nonblack people of color and black bodies – non black people function on the paradigm of conflicts – struggles between humans, while black bodies function on the level of antagonism – fundamental violence prior to the existence of whiteness

#### Coalitions replicate antiblack violence – partnering with junior partners of civil society extend the reach of society’s violence instead of destroying it. We can’t demand recognition or rights from within the system, but must destroy the system itself – Wilderson 03

#### *[If not Junior Partners Version]* Coalitions replicate anti-blackness – junior partners extend civil society rather than destroy it.

Wilderson **03[[48]](#footnote-40)**

**THERE IS SOMETHING ORGANIC TO BLACK POSITIONALITY THAT MAKES IT ESSENTIAL to the destruction of civil society.** There is nothing willful or speculative in this statement, for one could just as well state the claim the other way around: There is something organic to civil society that makes it essential to the destruction of the Black body. **Blackness is a positionality of “absolute dereliction”** (Fanon), **abandonment, in the face of civil society**, **and therefore cannot establish itself**, or be established, **through hegemonic interventions**. **Blackness cannot become one of civil society’s** many **junior partners**: **Black citizenship**, **or Black civic obligation**, **are oxymorons**. In light of this, **coalitions and social movements**, even radical social movements like the Prison Abolition Movement, **bound up in the solicitation of hegemon**y, so as **to fortify and extend the interlocutory life of civil society**, **ultimately accommodate only the satiable demands and finite antagonisms of civil society’s junior partners** (**i.e., immigrants, white women, and the working class), but foreclose upon** the **insatiable demands and endless antagonisms of the prison slave and the prison-slave-in-waiting. In short**, whereas such **coalitions and social movements cannot be called the outright handmaidens of white supremacy**, **their rhetorical structures and political desire are underwritten by a supplemental antiBlackness.** In her autobiography, Assata Shakur’s comments vacillate between being interesting and insightful to painfully programmatic and “responsible.” **The expository method of conveyance accounts for this air of responsibility**. **However**, toward the end of the book, she accounts for **coalition work** by way of **extended narrative as opposed to exposition**. We accompany her on one of Zayd Shakur’s many Panther projects with outside groups, work “dealing with white support groups who were involved in raising bail for the Panther 21 members in jail” (Shakur, 1987: 224). With no more than three words, her recollection becomes matter of fact and unfiltered. She writes, “I hated it.” At the time, i felt that anything below 110th street was another country. All my activities were centered in Harlem and i almost never left it. Doing defense committee work was definitely not up my alley.... i hated standing around while all these white people asked me to explain myself, my existence. i became a master of the one-liner (Shakur, 1987: 224). Her hatred of this work is bound up in her anticipation, fully realized, of all the zonal violations to come when a white woman asks her if Zayd is her “panther...you know, is he your black cat?” and then runs her fingers through Assata’s hair to cop a kinky feel. **Her narrative anticipates these violations-to-come at the level of the street, as well as at the level of the body. Here is the moment in her life as a prison-slave-in-waiting**, which is to say, a moment as an ordinary Black person, when she finds herself among “friends” — abolitionists, at least partners in purpose, and yet she feels it necessary to adopt the same muscular constriction, the same coiled anticipation, the same combative “one-liners” that she will need to adopt just one year later to steel herself against the encroachment of prison guards. The verisimilitude between Assata’s wellknown police encounters, and her experiences in civil society’s most nurturing nook, the radical coalition, raises disturbing questions about political desire, Black positionality, and hegemony as a modality of struggle.

## A2 Queer Turns

## A2 Nihilism

#### TURN – Cruel Optimism – putting faith in a system built on black death is net worse because it creates psychological violence

#### Nihilism and hope aren’t mutually exclusive. Hope constitutes a reason to invest in one’s existence. That is different from the “politics of hope” which is a hope that normative politics will emancipate the black body. They are blurring the lines between them. Recreates hegemonic domination.

**Warren 15[[49]](#footnote-41)**

**To speak of the “Politics of Hope” is to denaturalize** or demystify **a certain usage of hope.** Here I want to make **a distinction between “hope”** (the spiritual concept) **and “the politics of hope”** (political hope). The relationship between the spiritual concept of hope and its use as a political instrument is the focus of the black nihilist critique.2 Following Kant and other postmetaphysical philosophers, the critical field questions (and in some circles completely denounces) a certain spiritual predisposition to the world—that “unknowable” noumenon that limits Reason but provides the condition of possibility for its organization of the world of perception, phenomenon. The problem with the critical questioning of the spiritual is that it often appropriates spiritual concepts and then, insidiously, translates them into the “scientific” or the knowable, as a way to both capitalize on the mystic power of the spiritual and to preserve the spiritual under the guise of “enlightened understanding.” We find this deceptive translation and capitalization of spiritual substance within the sphere of the Political—that organization of social existence through political institutions, mandates, logics, and grammars—as a way to govern and discipline beings. If we think of hope as a spiritual concept—a concept that always escapes confinement within scientific discourse—then we can suggest that **hope constitutes a “spiritual currency” that we are given as an inheritance to invest in various aspects of existence**. The issue, however, is that **there is** often **a compulsory investment of this spiritual substance in the Political.** **This is the forced destination of hope—it must end up in the Political and cannot exist outside of it** (or any existence of hope “outside” the political subverts, compromises, and destroys hope itself. Like placing a fish out of water. It is as if hope only has intelligibility and efficacy within and through the Political). Put differently, **the politics of hope posits that one must have a politics to have hope;** politics is the natural habitat of hope itself. **To reject hope in a nihilistic way, then, is really to reject the politics of hope, or certain circumscribed and compulsory forms of expressing, practicing, and conceiving of hope.** In the essay “A Fidelity to Politics: Shame and the African American Vote in the 2004 Election,” Grant Farred (2006) exposes a kernel of irrationality at the center of African American political participation. Traditionally, political participation is motivated by self-interested expectancy; this political calculus assumes that political participation, particularly voting, is an investment with an assurance of a return or political dividend. **The structure of the Political—the circular movement between self-interest, action, and reward— is sustained through** what Farred calls **the “electoral unconscious.”** **It “historicizes the subject in relation to the political in that it determines the horizon of what is possible it maps, through its delimitation or its (relative) lack of limits, what the constituency and its members imagine they can, or, would like to expect from the political”** (217). In this way, the electoral unconscious, as the realm of political fantasy, mirrors the Lacanian notion of fantasy; **it maps the coordinates of the political subject and teaches it how exactly to desire the Political**. For Farred, there is a peculiar logic (“another scene”) operating as the motivation for African American participation in the Political. Unlike the traditional political calculus, where action and reward determine civic engagement, **African American participation does not follow this rational calculus—because if it did, there would actually be no rational reason for African Americans to vote, given the historicity of voting as an ineffective practice in gaining tangible “objects” for achieving redress, equality, and political subjectivity**. **African Americans**, according to Farred, **have an** “**irrational fidelity” to a practice that, historically, has yielded no concrete transformations of antiblackness**. This group is governed not by the “electoral unconscious” but by the “historical conscious,” which is the “intense [and incessant] understanding of how the franchise has been achieved, of its precarious preciseness as well as their (growing) contemporary liminality, their status as marginalized political subjects” (217). **African Americans are a faithful voting block** not because of voting’s political efficaciousness but **as a way to contend with a painful (and shame-full) history of exclusion and disenfranchisement. Political participation becomes an act of historical commemoration and obligation; one votes because someone bled and died for the opportunity to participate, and “duty” and “indebtedness” motivate this partial political subject.** Within this piece, we get a sense that black fidelity to the Political is tantamount to the Lacanian notion of drive—one perpetuates a system designed to annihilate—participation, then, follows another logic. The act of voting, according to Farred, is legitimate in and of itself; it is a means as an end (or a means without an end, if we follow Agamben’s logic [2000]). The means, the praxis of voting, is all there is without an end in sight. **African American political participation is an interminable cycle of reproduction, a continuous practice of reproducing the means of reproduction itself. This irrational fidelity to a means without an end gives rise to “the politics of despair”—representation forits own sake and the apotheosis of singular figures—and a politics without hope**: African American fidelity, however, takes its distance from Pauline “hope”— like faith, hope is predicated upon a complex admixture of expectations and difference. In this respect, **the African American vote is not, as in the colloquial sense, hopeful: it has not expectations of a shining city appearing upon an ever distant, ever retreating, hill in the unnamed-able future**. Fidelity represents the anti-Pauline politics in that its truth, **its only truth, resides in praxis**. (223) This brilliant analysis compels us to rethink political rationality and the value in “means”—as a structuring agent by itself. What I would like to think through, however, is **the distinction between “hope” and “despair”** and “expectations” and “object.” Whereas Farred understands political participation as an act without a political object, or recognizable outcome—without an “end,” **if we think of “end” and “object” as synonyms**—I would suggest that **the Politics of Hope reconfigures despair and expectation so that black political action pursues an impossible object**. We can describe this contradictory object as the lure of metaphysical political activity: every act brings one closer to a “not-yet-social order.” What one achieves, then, and expects is “closer.” **The political object that black participation encircles endlessly**, like the Lacanian drive and its object, **is the idea of linear proximity—we can call this “progress,”** “betterment,” or “more perfect.” **This idea of achieving the impossible allows one to disregard the historicity of anti-blackness and its continued legacy and conceive of political engagement as bringing one incrementally closer to that which does not exist—one’s impossible object**. In this way, **the Politics of hope recasts despair as possibility, struggle as triumph, and lack as propinquity.** This **impossible object is not tethered to real history, so it is unassailable and irrefutable because it is the object of political fantasy**.

#### **The Alternative creates social life within social death. Solves nihilism claims**

Sexton 11**[[50]](#footnote-42)**

[19] In recent years, social death has emerged from a period of latency as a notion useful for the critical theory of racial slavery as a matrix of social, political, and economic relations surviving the era of abolition in the nineteenth century, “a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” (Hartman 2007: 6). This “afterlife of slavery,” as Saidiya Hartman terms it, **challenges** practitioners in the field to question the prevailing **understanding of** a **post-emancipation society and** to **revisit** the most basic questions about the **structural conditions of antiblackness in the modern world**. To ask, in other words, what it means to speak of “the **tragic continuity between slavery and freedom” or “the incomplete nature of emancipation**”, indeed to speak of about a type of living on that survives after a type of death. For Wilderson, the principal implication of slavery’s afterlife is to warrant an intellectual disposition of “afro-pessimism,” a qualification and a complication of the assumptive logic of black cultural studies in general and black performance studies in particular, a disposition that posits a political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the Human in a constitutive way. **This** critical move has been misconstrued as a negation of **the** agency of black performance, or **even a denial of black** social life, and a number of scholars have reasserted the earlier assumptive logic in a gesture that hypostatisizes afro-pessimism to that end.ix [20] What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of “The Case of Blackness,” and the black optimism it articulates against a certain construal of afro-pessimism, is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in “the stance of the pathologist” in relation to black folks.x I say this not only because there is, in this version of events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology (“fetishization,” “obsession,” “repetition,”), but also because there is at the heart of the matter a rhetorical question that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker’s benefit: “So why is it repressed?” The “it” that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of obsessional neurosis is the understanding, which is also to say the celebration, of the ontological priority or previousness of blackness relative to the antiblackness that establishes itself against it, a priority or previousness that is also termed “knowledge of freedom” or, pace Chandler, comprehension of “the constitutive force of the African American subject(s)” (Chandler 2000: 261). [21] What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism “knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification” associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a reinscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it.xi In a way, what we’re talking about relates not to a disagreement about “unthought positions” (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about “unthought dispositions” (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a “generalized impropriety” so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door.xii Without sufficient consideration of the gap between statement and enunciation here, to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture, the discourse of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only seem like a “tragically neurotic” instance of “certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death” (Moten 2007: 9).xiii [22] Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak—as negation and impossibility—as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon’s sustained engagement finds Fanon situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic antiblack world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be’ black – in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of antiblackness on a global scale. Against the raceless credo, then, racism cannot be rejected without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world” (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to ‘be’ black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon? [23] Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology” (Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as **it is** imposed by a world **that knows itself through that imposition,** rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Thoughit may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not **an** accommodation to **the** dictates of the antiblack world. The **affirmation of blackness, which is to say an** affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in **a** valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to **health, to life, or to** sociality**.** Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—“above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we **might** create a transvaluation of pathology **itself, something like an embrace of pathology** without pathos. [24] To speak of black social life and black social death, black social life against black social death, black social life as black social death, black social life in black social death—all of this is to find oneself in the midst of an argument that is also a profound agreement, an agreement that takes shape in (between) meconnaissance and (dis)belief. Black optimism is not the negation of the negation that is afro-pessimism, just as black social life does not negate black social death by inhabiting it and vitalizing it. A living death is as much a death as it is a living. Nothing in afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not **social life** in the universe formed by **the codes of state and** civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonized, of all that capital has in common with labor—the modern world system. Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in, but it is lived **underground,** in outer space**. This is agreed**. That is to say,what Moten asserts against afro-pessimism is **a point** already affirmed **by afro-pessimism, is, in fact, one of the most polemical dimensions of afro-pessimism as a project: namely, that black life is not social, or rather that** black life is lived in social death. Double emphasis, on lived and on death. That’s the whole point of the enterprise at some level. It is all about the implications of this agreed- upon point where arguments (should) begin, but they cannot (yet) proceed.

## A2 Not Ontological (Hudson)

#### History DA – Their evidence doesn’t take slavery and the creation of the structuring logic of civil society into account – slavery creates the condition for the negation of blackness, and structures are built on this form of exclusion. Refusing signifiers doesn’t solve anything on a structural level.

#### Western Logics DA – Their evidence assumes we can structurally un-knot black death, a western logic of freedom which isn’t accessible to the Black Body – this perfects slavery

## A2 White People Can’t Read Wilderson

1. There is a difference between performativity and the things you perform. Performing for whiteness is advocating for USFG action which is worse than being white and responding to whiteness.
2. Whiteness is inevitable – we are within civil society, obviously there will be some whiteness embedded in my performance but you you are net worse because you are literally advocating for the whiteness of civil society – if I win any link arguments it means you are also antibalck
3. Judges should sequence the questions: First, should white people be involved in anti racism conversations and if yes, then second what should our anti racist policy be. The answer to the first one is yes because if white people aren’t involved then they become oblivious to their whiteness and perpetuate oppression, which means I just have to prove afropess is the best strategy
4. No uniqueness – the black body is commodified in the squo, that’s Wilderson, no reason I push it over the brink. Insofar as we are in a position of debate where whiteness is so prevalent it is pushed to the point where it is crucial for white people to read afropess
5. No implication – if I win that an unflinching paradigmatic analysis of civil society is good, the negative is the only one who does it, I’m the only one with any advocacy under the ROB
6. The Evans card is in the context of white guys from his lab reading afropess against a black team

#### The question is not whether or not we’re trying to be white anti-racists – it’s whether or not we acknowledge and understand our social location in the realm of white civil society – you’re right in the fact that we will never be able to be anti-racists but wrong in the fact that we should never combat anti-black violence

Applebaum 5**[[51]](#footnote-43)**

In a course on schooling and diversity, the topic for the week was different meanings of racism. I asked my students, ‘Who comes to your mind when you think of white∂ people who are complicit in sustaining racism?’ Most of my white students gave examples of overtly prejudiced people or groups – the Klu Klux Klan, the television∂ sitcom character Archie Bunker, someone they happened to know. Significantly,∂ they mentioned anyone except themselves. One student, however, meekly∂ responded, ‘all of us’. When challenged, this student explained that whereas racism∂ in the past was all about organizations like the Klu Klux Klan, Archie Bunker types∂ and Jim Crow laws, today racism is more subtle and often not seen by those who do not have to experience it.∂ This opened up a heated exchange in which I attempted to explain the different∂ meanings of racism, accentuating what certain understandings of social injustice∂ they make available and what they keep hidden. Rather than being willing to engage∂ in the different meanings of racism and their implications, many of these∂ predominantly white students were obstinately focused on denying their complicity**.** They were more concerned with proving how they were good antiracist whites than∂ they were in trying to understand how systemic oppression works and the possibility∂ that the[ir]y might have a role in sustaining such systems. In his journal, a white student∂ wrote, ‘In any situation you cannot be held responsible for something that you did∂ not do. Even on the smallest scale, if you don’t think that you’ve done anything∂ wrong, then you will be reluctant to change or to try and examine the problem’.∂ In their study of how white subjects perceive civil rights and equal opportunity,∂ Nancy Ditomaso and her colleagues (2003) attempt to demonstrate that one of the∂ ironic characteristics of white privilege is that white people do not have to think of∂ themselves as ‘racist’ for racial inequality to be reproduced (p. 189). The intimated∂ irony underlying what these researchers found is not that blatant, overt racism can be∂ implemented without the perpetrator’s awareness, but rather that the subtle but lethal∂ types of covert racism can be maintained even when whites believe themselves to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem**.** Indeed, it is my contention that it is∂ especially when white people believe themselves to be good and moral antiracist citizens∂ that they may be contributing to the perpetuation of systemic injustice.∂ Although what I will refer to as the ‘traditional conception of moral responsibility’∂ has many enabling features that ground such values as autonomy, respect for persons∂ and equality, such a conception of moral responsibility can also authorize denials of∂ complicity on the part of my white students. In what follows, I first describe what I∂ mean by the ‘traditional conception of moral responsibility’. This is not to imply that∂ any particular moral philosopher or theorist holds this view, but rather the point is to∂ emphasize that it is a view widely assumed by my students and that aspects of this∂ view are implied and tacitly supported in the many debates around the meaning of∂ moral responsibility taken up by moral theorists**.** These both enabling and∂ disenabling features of the traditional conception of moral responsibility are evident∂ in moral theorizing about moral responsibility, not so much in debates around what∂ it means to be a moral agent but, more conspicuously, **in discussions** around the∂ criteria that make one morally accountable for particular actions. Then I will turn to∂ three seemingly good, antiracist discourses that my white students engage in around∂ issues of difference and inequality – the discourse of colour-blindness, the discourse∂ of meritocracy and the discourse of choice. I argue that the traditional conception of moral responsibility authorizes these discourses and contributes to camouflaging∂ their limitations. By giving examples of how these discourses conceal systemic∂ oppression, hinder the development of cross-racial understanding, veil the relational∂ dimension of the social construction of race and promote a ‘race to innocence’, I∂ illustrate how such ostensibly moral discourses work to conceal the very complicity∂ that some social justice educators endeavour to expose.

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51. Barbara Applebaum, associate professor and chair of cultural foundations of education, is trained in philosophy of education. “In the name of morality: moral responsibility, whiteness and social justice education,” http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03057240500206089, NN [↑](#footnote-ref-43)